

THE
LAWS OF CHRIST ;
BEING A COMPLETE
DIGEST OF ALL THE PRECEPTS
CONTAINED IN
The New Testament,
WITH
COMMENTS AND DEVOUT MEDITATIONS
ON EACH TOPIC OF DUTY

ARRANGED FOR

The Daily Pursual of the Christian in his Closet

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Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.^y—1 COR. IX. 21

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P R E F A C E.



IN the humble hope that the present Work might, by the favour of God, be useful as a guide to Christian practice; and, by promoting evangelical morals, curtail the extent of that fearful heresy which has destroyed, and is still destroying, myriads of souls, the Author, with much solicitude, and after many prayers, sends it forth into the Christian world. He has studied general usefulness rather than literary gratification, and is very sensible that such a Work will admit of much extension and improvement; but as compression and adaptation to the habits of Christians engaged in the business of life were his chief aim, he trusts that this object has been, in some degree, accomplished. Though composed not without anxious thought, yet amidst such

a diversity of topics,—all practical and important,—and some attended with no little difficulty, probably there may be errors which have escaped notice, and which, when candidly pointed out, will receive the Author's best attention: these, it is hoped, will be more readily excused in a work which, it is believed, is *unique* in its form and design. It is now fourteen years since the Author first sketched the plan of the work, and he then knew of nothing at all similar, except Gastrell's *Christian Institutes*, which is a mere compilation of doctrines and duties in scripture language, and includes the peculiarities of the Mosaic code; nor has he heard of any thing since, except a work published by the celebrated Ram Mohun Roy, entitled "*The Precepts of Jesus*," which, however similar in title, is altogether different in design.

Bromley, Kent, March, 1832.

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ERRATA.

Page 31, line	4, <i>for loud read</i>	dread
41, ..	21, <i>for orgin, read</i>	origin
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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, stood before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to answer the accusation of the Jews, that they had *found him perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself was Christ—a king*; and when Pilate put the pointed question to him, *Art thou a king, then?* Jesus most explicitly avows his claim to this high character—*Yes, I am a king; but my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

Many splendid descriptions of Messiah's reign had been left on record by the Jewish prophets, which the ignorant, worldly-minded Jews, understood merely in the letter, and which they were disposed to interpret according to their own taste and wishes; but our Lord's answer to Pilate was a death-blow to all such carnal and gross views of the kingdom of Christ. He does not, it is true, state positively the nature of his kingdom; that we have to learn from his own discourses, and from the inspired writings of his apostles; but nothing could be more important to our knowledge of the subject than his total abnegation of *the kingdoms of this world*, as a pattern and authority for his own.

On a reference, then, to the discourses of Christ, we find him thus answering the question, *When the kingdom of God should come? The kingdom of*

heaven, saith he, cometh not with observation, i. e. with outward pomp and show; it is not an object of sight: Neither shall they say, Lo! here, or lo! there; for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you: it is of an internal spiritual nature.

The apostle Paul throws further light on the subject by saying, *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: it does not consist in formal rites and ceremonies relative to meat offerings and drink offerings; but is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

Uniting all these descriptions of the kingdom of Christ on earth, we learn both what it is not, and what it is. Those, therefore, greatly err, both Jews and Christians, who assimilate and unite the reign of Messiah to the kingdoms of this world: and those entertain just views and practices who consider it as spiritual, holy, and abstracted from the policy, the power, and the splendour of temporal dignity.

It is true, that Jesus is, by virtue of his *obedience unto death, as mediator between God and man, highly exalted, a prince and a Saviour; he is made chief above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named in heaven and in earth—that, at his name every knee should bow—that he is head over all things for the church; and that he has all power in heaven and on earth.*

In this sense his kingdom is *over all—all things are put under his feet.* Creation and providence belong to him. The Father acts only through the medium of the Son. But, *this kingdom is also invisible, heavenly, and not conducted on the principles of this world's pomp and power.*

The kingdom of Christ, however, in its peculiar, specific, and evangelical sense, is that authority which he exercises over the moral principles and conduct of all persons believing in him and professing to be his disciples. "These are his proper subjects, owning him as their lawful prince, responsible to him for their conduct, and regulated by his laws.

This being the nature of Christ's kingdom on earth, it was to be expected that we should find a code of laws, distinct from those of human origin and authority, and peculiarly adapted to promote the ends for which this spiritual kingdom is erected.

Upon strict examination of the inspired Christian records, it is found that Jesus has authoritatively provided such a code of laws, minute and comprehensive, simple and explicit, pure, and spiritual, and holy, like himself, the great exemplar of his own laws.

The basis of this code is undoubtedly, the law of God given to Moses in Mount Sinai, and contained in the decalogue: it is, indeed, more ample and specific; but the moral principle is precisely the same: both require LOVE as the operating motive;—love to God and love to man. There is, however, this difference in favour of the Christian dispensation, that it prescribes extremely little of rite and ceremony; and lays great stress on the practice of virtue and religious duties: while the Mosaic abounds with ritual and ceremonial ordinances, and is less explicit in its moral and religious requirements.

The Christian code being superior even to the Mosaic, which was also of divine authority, must

therefore be considered as a perfect system of morals, and transcending greatly all systems of human origin. There may be something good and true in those systems which are founded on propriety, or utility, or prudence, or benevolence, or sympathy; but each and all are defective; and the actions and habits proceeding from them, unless connected with Christian sentiments and the great master principle of morals, *Christian love*, cannot, in the sight of God, be accounted good.

In the Christian system then, we possess a security for good morals, which is not to be expected in any other. This is, indeed, the very end for which it is promulgated in the world. *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.* The theology of our religion conducts us to the practice of righteousness and mercy; and supplies to us the most powerful motives by which our nature can be influenced. We require both a moral principle and a written rule. Jesus has given to his disciples both; and no one is at liberty to sever them from each other.

The natural antinomianism of the human heart would reject both the principle and the rule; or, under the form and profession of submission, would pretend to be actuated by the principle, while it discards the rule. It is, however, no evidence of the existence of the *love of God shed abroad in the heart*, if we presume to set at nought those particular precepts by which the love of God is intended to operate. Those who are guilty of such presumption, do it at their peril; and by rejecting the preceptive portion of the gospel, forfeit all interest in its privileges.

THE
LAWS OF CHRIST.

§c. §c.

MONDAY.



THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

Then one of them who was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.—Matt. xxii. 35—40. Luke x. 25—28.

Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another: for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but, if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.—Gal. v. 13—15. Rom. xiii. 8—10.

THE great philosophers of antiquity vied with each other in the condensation of practical wisdom. Solon said—"Know thyself:" Chilon—

“ Regard the end of a long life:” Pittacus—
“ Know your opportunity:” Bias—“ Evils are many:” Periander—“ Application is every thing:” Cleobulus—“ A medium is best:” Thales—“ Promise, and you are undone.”

But, in neither, nor in all of these aphorisms is there that consummation of true wisdom, which is found in these words of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sentences of those great masters are short; the first and best of them is in two words; but, all that is essential in the morality of *our* great Teacher is contained in the monosyllable—**LOVE**. This is a principle of the very highest power; for “**GOD is LOVE.**” Well, then, might the apostle so finely describe and eulogize Christian love, saying, that it “suffereth long and is kind; envieth not; is not rash; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not irritated; imputeth not evil; rejoiceth not at iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth; covereth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things.”

Such is the pure and divine nature of love. Let us not, then, confound it with mere animal passion, or mere natural affection. The love of God *in* man partakes of the love of God *to* man: it is pure, spiritual, and unchangeable. Not with this holy affection is man born: it is the gift of God. “The love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit given to us.”

Let me, therefore, now put the question most solemnly to myself. Is the love of God thus shed abroad in *my* heart? He who “knew what was

in man" once said to those who piqued themselves on being the people of God—"I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." Might he with truth thus declare concerning me? Dreadful thought! Intolerable! Would the Saviour deign to put the question to me in the same form as to the Son of Jonas—"Lovest thou me?" What other answer could I return than that of the penitent disciple, corrected of his self-sufficiency, and say with the most profound humility,—“Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” I love thee because “thou art the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;” and I love thee, because I owe my being, and my redemption, and my life, and my all to thee!

And is this the real sentiment, the deepest feeling of my soul;—that which “many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it?” then let me look for the correspondent evidence of it in my life and practice.

The second commandment is like to the first; they are conjoined, being cognate. “He that loveth God will love his neighbour also:” he will love him as another self: he will be just and faithful to him in all his dealings; he will be kind and pitiful to him in seasons of distress and trial. The rising or falling of this moral thermometer, will indicate the temperature of the love of God in the “hidden man of the heart.” We may “with the mouth show much love,” and thus impose on ourselves more than upon others; “while our heart is going after its covetousness.” Awful delusion! Let it not be mine! Let me remember that obe-

dience to the commands of Christ is the only sure test of love.

'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet,
In swift obedience move ;
The devils know and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love.

TUESDAY.

GOOD WORKS.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.—
Matt v. 16.

Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance ; and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father ; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.—Luke iii. 8. Matt. iii. 8.

ALAS ! how dimly has the lamp of my Christian profession burned ! Had I been more careful and vigilant, my light would have shone before men, with much greater brilliance, and my heavenly Father would thus have been more glorified. As a Christian my life ought to be full of “ good works,” the fruits of “ repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” How can I otherwise be distinguished from the men of the world, who, though generally selfish, are sometimes bountiful and compassionate ?

The Christian is “ a fruitful vine, whose branches hang over the wall.” Oh that my character may never be dubious ! Let my faith be apparent in

my works! There is, indeed, no merit in either my faith or my works: "Christ is all and in all." But by thy grace, O Lord, I will obey thy precepts, and diligently employ myself daily, "while it is called to-day," in the performance of works that are good and profitable to my fellow-men, and suitable to that pure, and just, and merciful religion, which I profess: and may all my unprofitableness be pardoned through the perfect merits of him who "magnified the law, and made it honourable," and "who went about doing good." May I "still bring forth fruit in old age!" May I be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, and whose leaf shall not fade"—"a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified."

W E D N E S D A Y.

LOANS.

From him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.
—Matt. v. 42.

Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest.—Luke vi. 35.

"TURN not away him who wishes to borrow of me!"—No, steward and almoner of the divine bounty, how canst thou account with joy for thy

trust, if thou have "hidden thy Lord's money?" Canst thou spare the sum asked; dost thou believe the tale of wo, the pressing need? then, saith thy Redeemer, "turn not thy brother away: do good and lend." How much good mayest thou do by the loan! It may save an honourable mind from many days and nights of corroding care and anxiety, which might undermine health, and, in the meridian of life, hasten the parent of a numerous family to the tomb: it may encourage the diligent and the ingenious to pursue a profitable and useful occupation: it may wipe away a malignant reproach from the character of the just; it may aid the cause of God, and be the means of saving a thousand souls.

And, O "child of the Highest," shouldest thou receive or require "nothing again," either in the shape of interest or compensation, grieve not over the loan as profitless, if it have made thee such a benefactor. Nay, should even the sum lent never be returned to thee, repent not of the loan: thou "hast lent to the Lord:" he, "whose is the earth and the fulness thereof," hath condescended to borrow of his servant, that he may "repay him again." "Thy reward is great." Thou hast performed an explicit duty: thou hast enjoyed a noble privilege: thou hast acknowledged the supremacy and the bounty of the Lord of all; and, when thy stewardship shall be audited, another day, his approving word—"Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, be thou a ruler over many things," shall be more to thee than "thousands of gold and silver."

THURSDAY.

DEPARTMENT OF MINISTERS TOWARD EACH OTHER.

And when the ten heard it, (viz. the request of the mother of Zebedee's children,) they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.—Matt. xx. 24—28. Mark x. 42—45.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, the Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve : for whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at meat ? But I am among you as he that serveth.—Luke xxii. 24—27.

Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet ; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—John xiii. 13—17.

How unsuitable to a minister of Christ, is the spirit that is here reprobated ! Two disciples

would fain be exalted above all their brethren and have dominion over them. Family influence and a family party were to prevail in the church and among its ministers.

Rank, title, distinction, lordship, papal power, were to be sanctioned by the authority of Christ. One minister was to be lord, and another was to be his vassal! Such was not the religion which Jesus came to establish. Where we behold the love of power and distinction, there is the spirit of the world, and not the spirit of Christ, who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;” who took on him the form of a servant; and, instead of receiving from others, “gave his life a ransom for many.”

Let the ministers of Christ ever exhibit the same spirit of humility and self-denial. The greatest minister is the most humble man. Distinction in the Church of Christ must be obtained by the most kind, assiduous, and self-denying services rendered to brother ministers and to the church. “Before honour is humility.”

Oh! that I, as a follower of Jesus, may ever be ready to imitate his example of washing the feet of his disciples. How astonishing an instance of condescension and humility! Not, then, as the Roman Pontiff affects to obey this command, in the letter, by an annual washing of the feet of twelve young children, which were better done by their mothers, while he, at the same time, “opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that

REPENTANCE.

he is God." but rather let me obey this precept, in the spirit; and, by hospitality, gentleness, condescension, courtesy, and affection, may I prove myself the true minister or disciple of the divine and gracious Saviour.

FRIDAY.

REPENTANCE.

Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matt. iv. 17.

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying: the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel.—Mark i. 14, 15.

Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.—Luke xiii. 3.

Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.—Acts ii. 37, 38.

Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, who was before preached unto you.—Acts iii. 19, 20.

God now commandeth all men every where to repent.—Acts xvii. 30.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.—James iv. 8, 9, 10.

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that

are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast and repent.—As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.—Rev. iii. 2, 3. 19.

THE first word of our Lord's preaching was—“*Repent!*” He requires men to turn from their errors and their sins; from their indifference and their love of the world, to the pursuit of heavenly things. As repentance, therefore, is my Lord's first command, let repentance be my first duty.

And now, O my soul, faithfully examine thyself; or, rather, do thou, O Lord, “search me and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Have I, indeed, repented of my “old sins;” or do any of the sins of my youth still cleave unto me? O thou, who “knowest what is in man,” do I not abhor the very recollection of such sins? Do I not shudder at the thought of renewing them? Do I not tremble at the possibility? Do I not weep tears of mingled remorse and joy and fear over my former self? Oh, “do thou hold me up, and then I shall be safe.”

The apostle Peter exhorts us to “repent and be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,” and to “turn to God for the blotting out of our sins.” Has my repentance been thus followed by so great a blessing? The consciousness of pardon by the blood of Jesus, united to an abhorrence of sin—of all sin, may

lawfully impart to me a sense of security from divine wrath.

But is there not also too much reason for me to be admonished, to be “ watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die ?” Is there not much coldness, languor, negligence, imperfection, in my best works “ before God ?” I would remember, therefore, how I at first “ received and heard” the great truths of God and salvation. I would remember “ the love of my espousals” to the Saviour, when I was “ married to Christ,” by faith in his person, sacrifice, and authority. He is unchangeable, but I am unstable and unfaithful, and deserve to be put away. But no, his encouraging assurance comforts me, when he says : “ as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ;” and the reciprocal duty which I would charge on my heart is, to “ be zealous, and repent.”

O thou in whom all fulness of spiritual blessings dwells, enable me daily to perform this, thy command ; for thou art “ exalted a prince and a Saviour to *give* repentance to Israel and the remission of sins !”

SATURDAY.

ANGER.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment : but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in

danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.—Matt. v. 21, 22.

Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil.—Ephes. iv. 26, 27.

ANGER is, indeed, permitted; but, how often may I have sinned in my anger! How often have I been angry without a cause, or carried my anger to excess! How often have I used toward my brother those terms of execration which endanger the soul! The disciples of Pythagoras, if, in the course of the day, there had been anger or dissension between them, are said to have shaken hands and embraced, before the sun went down. But how often has my excessive anger suffered “the sun to go down,” and to cover my soul with darkness, brooding over my wrongs in a spirit of malignity and revenge! Yet, “if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.” O Lamb of God, impart to me thy own meek, lowly forgiving spirit; enable me to moderate my anger on all just occasions, and let not the peace of my soul be disturbed by any sudden gust of passion, by any tempest of sinful wrath! Amidst such agitation I lose self-command, and the devil seizes the helm to hurry my frail vessel toward the lake of perdition.

I am here especially warned against the use of opprobrious and provoking language. If, therefore, I have reason to be angry with my neighbour, my child, my servant, I will, by the help of God,

avoid that intemperance which would cause me to use harsh and wounding epithets. Let me remember that such words are spoken in the hearing of the great Judge of all. I will not, then, be ready to call fool or villain, every man with whom I may be displeased : and if such hard names be called on me, O Lord, enable me to take it patiently, and expostulate rather than revile.

SUNDAY.

PRAYER.

When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are : for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.—Matt. vi. 5—15.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye : Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil ; for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their tres-

passes, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
—Repeated, Luke xi. 1—4.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every
one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.—Matt. vii.
7—11; also Luke xi. 9, 10.

Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.—Matt. ix. 37, 38.

The same.—Luke x. 2.

And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke xviii. 1.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—John xvi. 24.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.—Coloss. iv. 2.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.—Ephes. v. 18.

Pray without ceasing.—1 Thess. v. 17.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—Heb. iv. 14—16.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh: And having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.—Heb. x. 19—22.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that

giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. • But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let ~~not~~ that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.—James i. 5—7.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.—James iv. 8.

Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.—James v. 13.

No. I.

IN these divine precepts we are instructed how to perform the duty of private prayer, in a manner acceptable to God. First, it must be *secret*, that there may be no temptation to hypocrisy and ostentation. It must also be *simple*, as proceeding from the heart, conscious of unworthiness and of dependance on God for “life, and breath, and all things.”

Again, it should be *earnest* and *importunate*, so as to admit of no denial. Had the king of Israel* struck the arrows five or six times on the ground, instead of thrice only, he would have “smitten Syria till he had consumed it.”

Lastly, it is to be *unceasing*. We must have our stated seasons for devotion, and we may not omit the duty at those seasons, except from necessity. Our disinclination, so far from justifying the omission, is the loudest call for the performance.

If this be my duty, then “Lord, teach me to pray!” May I possess *a devout mind*! Let me

* 2 Kings xiii, 17.

not be satisfied with the mere performance of the act or the duty ; but, as the flame mounts upward, so let our ejaculations ascend ; and not only from the closet and the sanctuary, but also from the city, from the market, and from the field ! Thus shall I “ continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving.”

MONDAY.

No. II.

AMIDST our numerous wants, difficulties, pains, and dangers, how exceedingly comforting is it to enjoy access to “ the throne of grace,” that we may find “ grace to help in time of need !” In our Lord’s Prayer those topics are inserted which are of daily occurrence. Indeed, it appears to be intended as a model for daily prayer, short, but comprehensive and important. One topic is selected and commented on—the forgiveness of injuries. “ From the heart” we are freely to forgive offences against ourselves, or, we are told, our heavenly Father will not forgive us *our* trespasses. How necessary to examine our hearts, that no malice, or hatred, or implacable feeling may be harboured within us !

And how encouraging to know that our prayers, offered in a right spirit, shall be availing with God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Sa-

viour! We are both warranted and encouraged to make use of the name of Jesus, in order to obtain a favourable answer to our prayers. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," and out of that fulness may every want, temporal and spiritual, be supplied.

With a confidence in God, inspired by faith in his promises and in his Son, let us daily "watch unto prayer;" and with humility "make known our requests unto God." In performing the duty of "*drawing nigh* unto God," we shall, assuredly, experience the fulfilment of the annexed promise, that he will "*draw nigh* unto us."

TUESDAY.

No. III.

WE are assured that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The efficacy of prayer is made by God to depend on the state of mind in which it is offered. That which is cold, formal, and unmeaning, draws down no blessing from heaven. He that cometh to God, must believe that he exists, and that he is "a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." And the apostle James warns us against expecting any thing from the Lord in answer to a wavering, doubtful, unbelieving mind in prayer. On the other hand, Jesus encourages us to hope for every thing in the

prayer of faith, by saying : " Whatsoever ye shall ask ~~in~~ my name, believing, that shall ye receive." Well may I exclaim with the disciples, " Lord, increase my faith !" Alas ! if I be answered, *according to my faith*, " how little can I hope to receive ! If I ask great things and expect little, am I in that state of mind, which is suitable for the reception of the blessings which I ask ? Let me therefore, examine myself, as to the nature and extent of my faith in prayer. Am I of wavering and doubtful mind ? Do I fear to ask much, as apprehensive of denial ; or asking much, do I, by unbelief, practically deny the truth, the goodness, and the power of God ? Has he not said, " Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it ?" Again : " If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it *shall* be given him : " and again : " God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." May " the Spirit help my infirmities !" May I be delivered from despondency, fluctuation, formality, in prayer ! May every petition offered be earnest and sincere ! " Making known my requests unto God," according to my sense of need, may I, with confidence, rely on his compassion, his wisdom, his power, as all engaged on my behalf by the new covenant, and Jesus, its ever-blessed Mediator, my Lord and Saviour !

WEDNESDAY.

FASTING.

When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance ; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father who is in secret : and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. vi. 16—18.

IN this precept the duty of occasional abstinence from food, and other lawful enjoyments, is certainly implied ; but no particular days are prescribed ; nor length of time, nor kind, or quantity of food.

The self-righteous or the hypocrite will be minute or ostentatious in these particulars ; but “ the Lord looketh at the heart ” in this duty ; so that while we are “ *not to appear unto men to fast,* ” but maintain our usual cheerfulness in social intercourse, we may secretly be denying ourselves those lawful indulgences, which, if not sometimes restrained, would become injurious to devotion and spirituality of mind.

Enable me, O Lord, to present unto thee my body, as “ a living sacrifice ! ” May my soul be entirely purified from corporeal grossness !—“ Through the Spirit, may I be enabled to mortify the deeds of the body ”—“ deny myself ”—“ bring my body under, and keep it in subjection ; ”

—last, even “after I may have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away!”

Alas! why does my soul thus “cleave to the dust?” Why is it so difficult to disengage it from habitual indulgence? Why so earthly—so enslaved by sense and appetite? Surely, if I lived more in communion with God by daily contemplation, and more truly believed that I am to reside with him for ever, no more to hunger or thirst, but to live spiritually like himself and his holy angels, I should obtain more power over the flesh: fasting on suitable occasions, and for a convenient time, would seem to me a fit preparative for the world celestial, and without a particle of Popish or Mahometan pride, on account of its supposed merit with God, I should take pleasure in fasting “to my Father who is in secret;” not doubting the promise of my Lord and Saviour, that, one day, this secret abstinence and self-denial observed for his glory and at his command, shall be openly noticed with honour and approbation. That distinction alone is worth infinitely more than all the luxuries of the east—more than all the delights of Paradise.

THURSDAY.

RELIGIOUS INQUIRY.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—

Matt. vi. 33.

Seek, and ye shall find.—Matt. vii. 7.

Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.—*John vi. 39.*
 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.—*John xii. 35, 36.*

ALAS! how few know or regard the objects here pointed out! And, of those who profess to be engaged in seeking them, how few treat them as things of the very highest moment! Instead of “seeking *first* the kingdom of God,” how ready are we to seek, *first* of all, worldly wealth, honour, ease, luxury; and second, third, or *last* of all, “the kingdom of God!”

Yet, who can describe the wealth, the honour, the ease, the luxury of that man, who, having sought this paramount object before all others, has entered into the enjoyment of the promise annexed to such a duty—that “they who seek shall find!”

And where shall we commence the search? The answer is ready—“Search the Scriptures:”—Search them daily, with earnest attention and humble prayer.

Search, O my soul, till thou hast found that “eternal life,” of which they testify. Having this heavenly light beaming upon thee, amidst the darkness of this world’s atheism, walk onward with haste to the bright and holy source from whence it flows. Live in this divine element. Let it irradiate thy whole form. Be thyself a lesser light of the Christian system, reflecting the true

image of "the Sun of righteousness." O "child of light," shine forth! "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning," ever shine on me with thine immutable beams, so wilt thou "show forth thy virtues, who hast called me out of darkness into thy marvellous light."

FRIDAY.

FALSE TEACHERS.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?—Matt. vii. 15, 16.

Take heed lest any man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many.—Mark xiii. 5, 6.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (viz. of Christ) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.—John ii. 10, 11.

"FALSE prophets!" "Deceivers!" "Antichrists!" Many such characters have infested the church, and many such there may still be! To avoid them, we must know them; and by what marks has "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" described them? Such men design "to make merchandize of us." We are, in their eyes, a profitable commodity—mere "goods and chattels!" If they can deceive us, we become their prey. The

wolf, therefore, puts on disguise: he creeps into the flock in "sheep's clothing." The very sheep cannot walk so softly as he, nor look so innocent and so simple! Nothing but the ravening ~~face~~ of his wolfish fang can reveal his true character or excite suspicion.

How difficult is it, sometimes, to distinguish the true servant of Christ from the deceiver! When one, professing to be a minister of the Lord Jesus, comes to me with pomp, and lordship, and great pretensions, I thank him for appearing without disguise and for putting me on my guard: but, when one comes with mortified and grave appearance, and unadorned, with soft and lisping speech, such as might have won the ear of Eve in Paradise, and with extraordinary professions of humility; then let me look to the *actual life and conduct* of that man and that minister; for, "by their fruits shall they be known."

Am I a teacher of others, how needful that I should guard against all dissimulation, and appear in the lovely attire of "simplicity and godly sincerity;" "adorning in all things, the doctrine of God my Saviour!" And how necessary that I should myself be well assured that I am not a teacher of false doctrine, misleading the souls of men—a "blind guide, leading the blind!" Awful infatuation! Oh! that I may neither deceive nor be deceived! Subtle and pernicious errors abound: they are permitted to try our faith and sincerity. We are, however, warned against them, and should ever be on our guard, "that we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with

every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ." Such vigilance against false teachers is now as necessary as in the primitive times. We must beware of novelties in religion. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The great lines of saving truth are drawn broad and strong. God has graciously marked out with clearness the highway of truth and holiness, so that a plain, simple, "way-faring man may not err therein." After receiving the scripture of truth for our map, and the Holy Spirit for our guide, surely if we miss the way to heaven, and are turned aside from the truth, the blame must rest wholly with ourselves, and we must bear its dreadful consequences for ever.

I will, then, by the help of God, keep at the farthest distance from those men, their writings, and their disciples, who bring not "the doctrine of Christ," as contained in the Holy Scriptures. This treasure of divine truth I will daily explore with humility and prayer, trusting to the promised Spirit of truth, to guide me into all truth, which it may please God to reveal to his servant; and waiting with great desire, "to know even as I am known."

S A T U R D A Y.

FOOD.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.—1 Tim. iv. 1—5; v. 23.

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake.—1 Cor. x. 25.

WHAT a variety, and what an abundance of food hath the great Creator provided for his creatures—and more especially for man! There is variety, and there is abundance for the lower animals; but even that is ultimately for the benefit of man who makes *them* *his* food, or in some other way serves himself of them!

In partaking of this bounty, how extensive is the liberty granted to the Christian! The scruples of the Jew or the Gentile need not affect his conscience. Paradise, with all its sweets, was given to Adam, and of every tree of the garden he might freely eat—save one—that tree, alas! so fatal to our race: but to Christians all that is good for

food is given without *one* restriction. "The world is ours." The distinction of clean and unclean in food, hath passed away with the dispensation which created it; and the great truth which it portrayed is embodied in the essence of the Christian character—"holiness to the Lord."

Let me, then, as the servant of Christ, "receive with thanksgiving, and sanctify by the word of God and prayer," every thing that is good for food; rejoicing in the liberty of the gospel, yet sober and moderate in the use of all things; considering the end for which my life is thus bountifully nourished and supported; and that any intemperance is a sin against my benefactor, and a foul reproach to my Christian profession.

SUNDAY.

THE SABBATH, OR LORD'S DAY.

And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?—that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much, then, is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days.—Matt. xii. 10—12.

To what extremes have men gone in their observance or neglect of the Sabbath! The Pharisees

would not permit any one to walk on that day over a field newly sown, lest, by transporting some of the grains with his foot, he should be guilty of sowing corn on the Sabbath-day. On the other hand, how many utterly despise and neglect this holy day, spending its precious hours in sloth, or luxury and worldly pleasure, or in eager pursuit of gain! As disciples and servants of Christ, we are called upon to avoid both these extremes of superstition and contempt. As we are "under the law to Christ," and as he is "Lord of the Sabbath-day," we are certainly bound to keep the commandment which says: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." At the same time, we are to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." It is an institution as old as the creation of the world, and was not intended for the family of Abraham alone, but for the family of Adam, "the father of us all." It was "made for man"—for rest, for holy rest from all ordinary business, though not from all occupation. It was "made for man"—for man, as an essentially religious being, requiring a specific portion of time for contemplation of God, his maker and benefactor, and for those acts of homage and worship, which the glorious Creator has an undoubted right to require and to receive. It was "made for man," that he might on earth enjoy some foretaste of the "*sabbatism*," or rest which remaineth for the people of God," when the days of their labour and sorrow on earth shall have passed away.

. Whether, therefore, we name this day, Friday,

Saturday, Sunday, Monday, or consider it the first day or the last day of the week, the obligation to observe the *seventh* day remains unaltered. This is emphatically "the Lord's day." It belongs of right to Jesus, the Messiah. It celebrates not the creation alone, but the redemption of mankind by the resurrection of "the Son of God with power,"—creating all things anew."

If Christians, we are "the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in:" and what day so suitable for "good works" as the Lord's day—the holy Sabbath? Pharisees may question whether it be lawful to heal the sick on this day, and condemn the innocent for rubbing out an ear of corn on the Sabbath, while fasting and labouring in their master's service; and the licentious and ungodly may catch at the exculpation of the disciples, and pervert it to mean that "the Sabbath was made for man"—to forget his Maker on that day; to use the day for luxury, business, amusement, visiting, or sloth, just according to the will and the caprice of man; but the true worshipper of God, the genuine disciple of Christ, will distinguish between such false glosses, and will understand that it "is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days." We should be engaged in works of mercy and goodness for the benefit of our fellow Christians and our neighbours in general. To teach the ignorant, to "visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction," to relieve the poor, to tend the sick, to comfort the mourner, are honourable and pious works, be-

fitting a disciple of him who “went about doing good.”

O Lord of the Sabbath, enable me to improve to better purpose this sacred day! Forgive my past unprofitableness! May the claims of this holy day on the reverence and gratitude of mankind be better understood and universally acknowledged! May the sanctity of this day, as distinguished from all others of human appointment, be more deeply felt! And while many are perverting or despising it, may my conduct, my words, my thoughts, on this day, be all religious without gloom, and serious without formality! May I know how to temper piety with cheerfulness; and, from a well-spring of holy joy and peace within, “may I, on this day, draw the waters of salvation.”

MONDAY.

CHRISTIAN PROFESSION.

Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. — Matt. xi 28–30.

— A bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. — Matt. xvii. 5.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,

and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul: or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.—Mark viii. 34—38.

And there went great multitudes with him; and he turned and said unto them, If any come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.—Luke xiv. 25—33.

AND who, among the sons of men, that has not heard and obeyed thy call, O Lord, is *not* labouring and heavy laden? Who does not need this divine rest? Can any person, or any object in this world, give rest to the soul? Surely all beneath the sun is “vanity and vexation of spirit!” The world is “a troubled sea;” how, then, can we expect to find repose there? But in thee, my Saviour, I shall ever find peace! To thee I *come*! Thy *yoke* I take! Of thee I would *learn*! In the imitation of thy meekness and lowliness of heart, my soul shall find rest: this will teach me to renounce all pride and vain pretensions before God; and, relying on thy perfect merits, I shall enjoy “peace with God, through the blood of the cross:” my anxieties respecting pardon, acceptance, and salvation, shall be entirely allayed; and

I shall “both hope and quietly wait” for the redemption effected by thy “precious blood.” From the tyranny and pain of evil passions, vain pursuits, restless desires, I shall be made free. Every wish will be sanctified, and every desire moderated by conformity to thy will. In coming to thee how grievous a yoke, how intolerable a burden shall I cast off. Thou hast, indeed, “a yoke” for me, but “it is easy;” thou hast a burden, but “it is light.” Let me not refuse to wear *thy* yoke, and bear *thy* burden. Though despised, reproached, persecuted by the hypocritical and the profane, I will ever count this profession my true honour: like Moses, I will “esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,” having “respect to the remuneration.” What if “the Captain of my Salvation,” himself “made perfect, through sufferings,” should require me to share with him the burden and the ignominy of the cross? Was not that his honour and glory? Did he not, “for the joy set before him, endure the cross, despise the shame?” Is not the way of sorrows the way to glory? Away, then, all false shame—all “fear of man that bringeth a snare!” From amidst a cloud of glory above, around me, I hear the voice of the Eternal Father, directing me to hear and obey his beloved Son. Dare I refuse compliance? Shall I crouch before “the world’s loud laugh,” ashamed to avow my convictions; “ashamed of Christ and his words?”—No; “let my tongue rather cleave to the roof of my mouth:” let my eye be kept intent on the opening clouds of

heaven, expecting the appearance of "the Son of man coming in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

What shall I ever gain, in any instance, by "denying the Lord that bought me?"—Gain? Alas! I should "lose my own soul," and justly deserve "eternal shame and contempt." I will, then, by thy grace, O Lord, "deny myself, take up my cross, and follow thee!"

We read that "great multitudes went with Jesus:" but so far is he from feeling gratified or honoured by the swelling numbers of a promiscuous crowd, that he turns to them and pronounces terms of adhesion to himself and qualifications for his school, much too severe for the multitude. He looks to the *quality* of his followers, rather than to their *number*. Fatal, indeed, to the Christianity of the many who profess his name, are the conditions which our Lord has here recorded. How hard—how impracticable! And yet, false-hearted professor, there is no possible compromise. Whatever shall interfere with the paramount duty which we owe to our teacher and Lord, must be utterly renounced, though it be so dear and tender a relation as that of father, mother, wife, children, brother, sister. This test of attachment to Christ applied to all who bear his name—how will the ranks be thinned; how will the multitude melt away! Peradventure only a decimation; but if *one-fourth* of Christendom remain after the ordeal, it will be well. O my soul, apply the test faithfully to thyself! Whatever others

do, I will by thy grace, O Lord Jesus, be thy disciple on thine own terms, even to the end Amen.

TUESDAY.

DRESS.

in like manner, also, I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.—1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

To woman nature hath given a soft and beautiful veil, as the ornament of her person, and the emblem also of that modesty and retirement which form her highest beauty and greatest attraction. And while Christianity raises her to her proper rank and privilege, as the friend and companion of man, it jealously guards against the abuse of the favour which it confers.

Our divine Law-giver commands, that all his female subjects shall, by their dress and personal appearance, be distinguished from the vain and meretricious costume of the world. The daughter of heaven must, at once, be distinguished from the woman of pleasure. Yet, alas! how often are they, in appearance and manner, confounded! If, however, they would not displease the Lord, let “women, professing godliness,” lay aside all ex-

travagance and "costly array" in dress; and employ the time and the expense thus prostituted to unworthy purposes, in the performance of "good works." What a contrast in the characters of Jezebel and Dorcas!

Let the Christian maiden or mother consider that, with the wise and the good, modesty, simplicity, humility, and benevolence, are the most powerful attractions, as they are the most permanent virtues of woman-kind.

WEDNESDAY.

OATHS.

Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.—Matt. v. 33—37.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.—James v. 12.

It is but too evident that the style of the world's speaking in common conversation is like itself—

profane. As a Christian, then, may I be marked by my style of purity and simplicity. All meaning expletives or profane asseverations I must avoid. These phrases, "upon my honour"—"upon my life"—"upon my soul"—"by God"—"by Jesus," and such like, are in my Lord's commandment, forbidden, and "they come from the evil one." Enable me, daily, O Lord, in my intercourse with the world, to "set a watch on the door of my lips that I sin not with my tongue:" and when I hear any thing profane, may I wisely and courageously reprove it, for the honour of thy name, whose disciple and follower I am! Surely I have been guilty of "partaking of other men's sins," by my frequent connivance at their profane conversation! Might I not have given it more frequently a direct reproof? Alas! this fear of man,—this false shame! When shall I conquer them? When shall I realise the continual presence of God in all companies, on all occasions? I am ashamed of my weakness, my timidity, my unbelief, my sordid self-interest. Oh that, henceforth, I may boldly, and yet with "the meekness of wisdom," testify against the profane conversation which every where abounds!

We are, however, to distinguish between profane oaths in ordinary conversation, and the "oath for confirmation, which is an end of all strife." Upon solemn occasions we may say with the apostle Paul, "God is witness." This is the ultimate test of the truth of evidence, and may lawfully be used by the most scrupulous Christian. Yet should the lawful oath be restricted to solemn and impor-

36 RELIGIOUS DEDICATION OF CHILDREN.

tant occasions, otherwise its sacred force is diminished, and perjury becomes too common to be punished.

Oh when shall "the mouth of them that speak lies be stopped?" When shall "every man speak truth with his neighbour?" When shall the witnessing eye of God's omniscience be seen flaming brighter than the sun at his meridian, and, through a perpetual day, manifesting beyond all doubt, the most secret actions of mankind?

THURSDAY.

RELIGIOUS DEDICATION OF CHILDREN.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray : and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.—Matt. xix. 13--15.

When Jesus saw his disciples rebuking those who brought the young children, he was much displeased, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.—Mark x. 14.

And they brought unto him also infants, that he should touch them : but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer

little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.—**Luke xviii. 15. 16.**

How lovely does “the good Shepherd” appear with the lambs of the flock in his bosom! And where should they be for safety and happiness but there? Let all ministers of Christ learn from their Lord and Master, to show kindness to the young, and to act the part of a tender “shepherd and bishop of souls.” If children be overlooked or repulsed, Jesus will be “much displeased.” If sought out, watched over, and brought to him, he will, doubtless, display marks of approbation.

Let parents here learn to cherish an early and tender concern for the salvation of their offspring. Let children be dedicated to the Saviour in their earliest years; let them be brought openly to him by public ordinances: let them be baptized into Christ, that they may learn his doctrine and walk in the footsteps of his flock. Let the blessing of Christ be sought for our children before every earthly advantage. What is beauty? what is fortune? what is learning, without the blessing of the Lord of all? Let our children be cordially surrendered to Christ and his service. Let them be the Lord’s. May he but deign to receive them, and be “a Father to them;” may they but become “the sons and the daughters of the Almighty Lord;” then, O Lord, shall the fondest wishes of my parental breast be to the utmost gratified. I can ask—I can desire no more. Let my son, my daughter, be a true Christian; let me but know that the blessing of “the good Shepherd” who

MARRIAGE.

"To give life for the sheep," is upon them, then I **will** be in peace and leave them without solicitude **from the perils** of this wilderness; trusting on their **faithfulness** to that care and that faithfulness which **hitherto** guided *my* steps, and led me into **green** pastures."

In the humble, docile spirit of a little child, may **I wait** on thee, O Lord, to learn thy will, and to **receive** thy blessing! Laying aside all prejudice, pride, and self-sufficiency, may **I** be prepared for the kingdom of heaven!

FRIDAY.

MARRIAGE.

It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But **I** say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saying for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. — Matt. v. 31, 32.

The Pharisees came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. — Matt. xix. 3—6.

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is

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good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself, but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord, If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean: but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?—1 Cor. vii. 1—16.

Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say that it is

good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit: not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. — 1 Cor. vii. 25—40.

LIGHTLY as the marriage state is viewed by the multitude, and precarious as it is in many parts of the world, how gracious is our God and Saviour to legislate for us in respect to so important a relation of life!

By the Christian law, woman is established in her proper rank in society;—neither slave nor idol;—but “a help-meet” to man: and, although in times of persecution and “present distress,” it may be “good,” as saith a holy apostle, to be or to continue unmarried, yet the same authority hath pronounced a most comprehensive eulogium on this state of life, by declaring that “Marriage is honourable in all.” He who otherwise determines, while he contradicts his Maker, lays a snare for his brethren.

But, while liberty and even encouragement to enter into this state are afforded, from the jealousy with which it is guarded by the divine laws we may gather its sacredness. This relation is holy; it is religious in its nature and origin: much discretion, therefore, is requisite in entering upon it: we are “at liberty to marry whom we will—only in the Lord.” *The disciples of Christ are to intermarry only with each other.* Those who have inadvertently or presumptuously violated this law, have found by sad experience, that, in keeping it, they would have as much consulted their own happiness, as the authority of the law-giver. However, the marriage-tie once formed may not be lightly dissolved: all inconveniences, infirmities, differences, are to be patiently borne; and scarcely any cause, except a transgression of the vow of

mutual fidelity, will justify a separation. The apostle does, indeed, suppose some peculiar case in which the parties cannot live together, when he says: "Let not the wife depart from her husband," though she be enslaved, maltreated, and oppressed; but if this treatment should become intolerable, and she should be obliged to depart, "let her remain unmarried;" or rather let her seek some means of "reconciliation with her husband." This exception to the rule requires a sound judgment in respect to the particular case to which it may be applied, and should not be advised or acted upon without an obvious necessity.

Let us, then, be grateful to our Creator for the appointment of this intimate and endearing relation; let us continually seek his grace to enable us to fulfil the vow which we may have made to the Lord; and let us avoid every temper and every temptation, which might tend to dissever the matrimonial bond.

SATURDAY.

HOSPITALITY.

Be given to hospitality.—Rom. xii. 12.

Use hospitality one to another, without grudging.—1 Pet. iv. 9.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.—Heb. xiii. 2.

How lovely is the true Christian! Far removed from that selfishness, which is the bane and the re-

proach of our fallen nature, his profession engages him to the performance of every office of kindness toward his fellow-man. He is, in truth, "a partaker of the divine nature," which is goodness itself; and he is thereby prompted to "do good to all men, as he has opportunity." The precept here enjoins the practice of hospitality, not to friends and brethren only, but to strangers. In places more remote, this duty is most requisite; and though the occasion should frequently return, we are not to be "weary in well-doing;" but still to "use hospitality without grudging." The duty is plain, and every true disciple of Christ will cheerfully obey, because it is the declared law of his Sovereign Lord. But he is not left merely to the abstract duty: he shall be amply repaid for all his hospitable attentions to the benighted or bewildered traveller, not only by the pleasure of performing a Christian duty, but sometimes by the unexpected discovery of an angel of God—a special messenger of mercy and comfort—a true and faithful friend.

How much of the sweetest intercourse of life has sprung from the open and frank hospitality shown toward a stranger! And shall this privilege be shunned and renounced by the Christian--- by him who sings---

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed his precious blood!

Shall he "shut up his bowels of compassion," when a poor brother, a poor minister of the Gos-

pel, it may be who has no friend, no acquaintance, in the place to which he comes, must seek the purchased, and oftentimes expensive accommodations of an inn? Shall such opportunities of exercising a delightful duty be evaded from indolence, pride, covetousness; or, if unavoidable, shall our hospitality be so cold and grudging, that our humble but worthy guest is glad to retreat to the inferior comforts of a roof, where he can sojourn, at least, without wounded feelings, though he may not there find a disinterested friend?

One tender tie bound together all the primitive Christians as an entire family of brothers and friends throughout the world: and if the middle ages of a corrupt and spurious Christianity have loosened and broken this tie, shall it not, in these latter days, be re-united in all its pristine strength? Yes, soon shall the day return, when "the love of Christ"—that all constraining, almighty force—shall sweep before it the remaining pride and selfishness which have so long separated the Christian family; and they who hope to sit down together at "the table of the Lamb" above, shall, with cordial hospitality, welcome each other to their table and their house, or assist them in whatever way may be needful for prosecuting their business or their journey, hoping to greet each other, ere long, in the regions of heavenly rest.

SUNDAY

PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

— Go preach, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses: nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it: and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomerrah in the day of judgment than for that city.* Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues: and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.—

Matt. x. 7, 9—19. See Luke ix. 3—5; x. 3—11.

When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.
Matt. x. 23.

Fear them not, therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them who kill the body, but are not

* This charge to the disciples is recorded also by Mark, ch. vi. 7—11.

able to kill the soul : but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father : but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven : but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.— Luke x. 26—33.

Go ye into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.—Matt. xxii. 9.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.—Mark xvi. 15.

Then the master of the house said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.—Luke xiv. 21—24.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble : every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.—1 Cor. iii. 10—13.

To all who are authorised to preach the Gospel, directions are here fully given for the performance of the duty. No bounds are set to the field

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

of labour, except those which circumscribe the globe. Hence their commission: "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel." Well knowing how precious a boon he was bestowing on the world, Jesus charges the maintenance of his preachers on those who receive the spiritual benefit. The ministers of Christ are to "go" with all diligence and activity on this holy service to cities, towns, villages, streets, lanes; yea, to the highways and hedges, that no human creature on earth may be left unvisited, unsought, unblest with the joyful sound of salvation by the cross of Christ. Kings, governors, and councils, and the highest of men must hear the tidings; and well for them if they "kiss the Son" of God, and count themselves "not worthy to loose the thong of his sandal." But above all must not *the poor* among men be neglected, the miserable, the ignorant, the outcast. These are to be sought out with pitiful concern and diligence by the servants of Him, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Yes; *the truth* must be spoken, proclaimed, urged, defended, at all risks. "Great is truth, and it shall prevail." Let not "the standard-bearer faint" under his burthen! Let not the Christian, much less the Christian minister, "turn his back in the day of battle!" He who professes the Gospel, and acts according to it, "must suffer persecution," especially the faithful champion of the truth, the undaunted, uncompromising minister of the word.

Though sent, therefore, by the loveliest and

best of Beings, "the perfection of beauty" and goodness, on an errand of love and pity and eternal salvation, to a world drowned in perdition and totally unworthy of rescue or help, these messengers of heavenly grace are forewarned of the reception and treatment which they must often expect at the hands of those whom they are sent to save. They are "sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." What but that Almighty hand which once "stopped the mouths of lions," can prevent the fatal issue of so extraordinary a commission? What but the universal Providence which guides the fluttering new-fledged sparrow to the ground, and numbers every particular hair of the head, can guide, support, defend, these unarmed heralds of peace?

But "if God be for us, who can be against us?" The Master himself is always nigh to his servants—ever in the field, though, it may be, unseen. The servants have but one thing to do. "Go and preach" that which is commanded. As subalterns under the Great Captain of Salvation, they are not answerable for consequences in obedience to orders. Jesus their Lord takes *them* all upon himself. If persecuted in one city, far from courting or defying persecution, they are ordered to flee to another city. They must stoop to conquer. Perseverance, unwearied perseverance, in "preaching the word, instant in season, out of season,"—this is the duty, to "go every where, publishing the doctrine."

Happy is that servant who can return and say, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded;"

“Happy is he who, with the magnanimous Paul, in the face of bonds and imprisonment awaiting him in every city,” can say, “None of these things move me.” Honoured servant of the Lord, to whom, under God, all this western world is indebted more than can be expressed, we rejoice and give thanks for thy fidelity, thy unshaken fortitude, thy seraphic zeal! May others copy from thee this reflected image of thy glorious Lord! Upon the eastern nations may “the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings!”

The apostle Paul represents the ministry of the Gospel as the work of a builder. The foundation of our hope is Christ: he alone is “the Rock of our salvation.” How goodly a superstructure then ought to be raised on such a foundation! The splendid vision of the city of God, which John beheld in Patmos, its foundation “garnished with all manner of precious stones;” its wall of jasper, great and high; its twelve gates each a single pearl, and “the street of pure gold,” affords a model for this celestial architecture. What congruity is there between such materials and such a building, and poor mean tenements of wood, thatched with straw? When the “fervent heat” of the last day shall melt the very “elements” of nature, and all works human and divine, shall be cast into the great and awful crucible of Him who shall sit as a refiner to “try every man’s work of what sort it is,” what will become of “wood, hay, stubble,” human errors, theories, conjectures, disputes, prejudices? What if a Christian’s life, especially a minister’s, shall have been employed in building these things on the founda-

tion, even Christ? Oh! if I be a minister of Christ, let me be careful to edify the congregation with sound doctrine and heavenly morals! If a private Christian, let me become, by truth, holiness, and good works, a portion of those ever-during materials which are to compose this "habitation of God." And when the awful "fiery trial" shall come, as come it will, may my *work*, as well as my "foundation," abide the test! May I suffer no "loss" from having "laboured in vain!" Let me see to it, that my time, strength, and abilities be all spent in the pursuit of worthy, important, and beneficial ~~objects~~—those which more immediately advance the glory of Christ and the salvation of men.

MONDAY

CENSORIOUSNESS.

Judge not that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye.—Matt. vii. 1—5. See Luke vi. 37, 41, 42.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the

law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy : who art thou that judgest another ?—James iv. 11, 12.

How much, alas! are we disposed to commit this sin! Instead of cultivating the “charity which covers a multitude of sins,” we are too apt to magnify small offences in others, and diminish greater faults in ourselves. We are required, however, to “judge righteous judgment.” When it is our duty, as sometimes it must be, to form a judgment of the conduct and character of another, especially of a Christian brother, let it be done in the spirit of meekness and candour, and not of harsh and unjust censure. Let us judge of others as we would wish them to judge of us, in like circumstances. Let us not swell the mote into a beam. The harsh censor is, by the Great Lawgiver who searcheth the heart, pronounced “a hypocrite.” He pretends to higher morality than his brother; but, could his *pride* be brought to view, how much more odious would he appear! How tender should we be of the reputation and the feelings of others!—as tender as of our own.

“Herein,” O Lord, may I continually “exercise myself.” I would truly repent of all censorious thoughts and expressions. I would watch against hasty judgments concerning others, and rather examine and judge myself; knowing that I am not naturally better than others; and that, if I am actually better, it is “by the grace of God that I am what I am.” Let me remember, that

the Law-giver, whom I am bound to obey, is the great Judge of the whole world, and will hereafter call me to an account for my secret thoughts of others, as well as for my words. Oh! that I may stand approved in the sight of that "one Law-giver, who is able both to save and to destroy!"

TUESDAY.

CHRISTIAN RESERVE.

GIVE not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.—Matt. vii. 6.

ALAS! how many of our fellow-men are but too fitly characterized by the appellations of "dogs" and "swine!" Their violence, churlishness, brutal insensibility, profaneness, and sensuality, render it impossible to hold any communication with them in the ordinary concerns of life, beyond that which is absolutely necessary and unavoidable; much less in the concerns of religion. To attempt such an intercourse is only to expose ourselves and our religion to contempt and injury. For such characters we can only pray, that God would, in his mercy, soften and cleanse their hearts; and add to our prayers the sermon of a holy and pious example in our own lives.

Our religious converse we must reserve for

those who will receive it gratefully; or, at least, without opposition and scorn. We must select our associates, and skilfully adapt our discourse to characters and circumstances, that we may be “wise to win souls;” and, by obtaining a candid and respectful hearing, promote the honour and glory of our Lord, in accessions to the number of his disciples.

W E D N E S D A Y.

PREPARATION FOR ANOTHER WORLD.

Watch ; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
Matt. xxiv. 42.

Be ye ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.—Matt. xxiv. 44.

Watch ; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.—Matt. xxv. 13.

Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning : lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all—WATCH.—Mark xiii. 33—37.

Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the lord

when he cometh shall find watching : verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye, therefore, ready also ; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.—Luke xii. 35—40.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.—Luke xxi. 34—36.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day : we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others ; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.—1 Thess. v. 5—8.

As the diurnal revolution of this our globe, causes one-half of mankind to be asleep, while the other half is awake ; so is it in respect to the world of minds. The multitude are, indeed asleep,—fatally asleep ; and many are awakened only by the scorching flame of hell, or the doleful cry of misery to which they themselves are hastening. But true Christians are denominated, “ chil-

dren of light"—"children of the day." It becomes us, therefore, not to sleep as others do. To fulfil this duty, we must avoid all the causes of spiritual sloth and lethargy; for, as the bodily frame becomes heavy, and unfit for duty, when "overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness," so the mind is unfitted for spiritual duties and enjoyments, not only by those very causes, but by "the cares of this life;" by "the love of the world," by the desire of worldly wealth, honour, and power. These, alas! are the impediments to our spiritual prosperity:—these the snares, which destroy souls! As a faithful friend, Christ warns us of our danger. "What I say unto you, I say unto all—WATCH!" Such emphasis would not have been laid on this word, had he not known our liability to remissness in the duty. Let me, then, as a Christian, never lose the sound of my Lord's words! I am his servant, engaged to do his will, while here; and he is absent, having left me in charge to keep wakeful, and ever expecting his return. The year, the day, the hour of his coming are all uncertain. That is not for me to know. "The times and the seasons the Father hath reserved in his own power." My great duty is to be always on the watch, preparing for my Lord's coming, whether in the day or in the night—whether with notice, or suddenly. How awful not to be ready to die, when the hour shall arrive! To be in hurry and confusion of mind, when all should be calm, solemn, and composed! Is there any thing in my temporal concerns, that might now be adjusted, and which, if delayed to the hour of death,

would occasion care, at least, if not distraction, and disturb my spiritual and eternal affairs ;—let it be done, this day ; “ let not the sun go down ” on my sinful delay !

Is any lust allowed—any worldly conformity, or indulgence contrary to my Christian character, and opposed to the will of the Lord ;—I tear it from my heart ! Henceforth, by thy grace, O Lord, I will count thy approbation more to me than friends, or wealth, or life ! Oh ! the blessedness of that servant, whose thoughts are all absorbed in his master’s interest and honour ; who thinks all time lost that is not spent in his service ; who mourns his master’s absence, and rejoices at the sound of his steps, as he returns home ! Among men such a servant would always find favour ; but with Christ he shall find “ honour, glory, and immortality.” He that watcheth for Christ’s coming shall enjoy the extraordinary honour and happiness of being served by Christ in glory. Who would give up the hope of sitting down to table in heaven, and banquetting with God, and being served by the Son of God himself, for any earthly distinction or enjoyment ? None but the “ man of the world, who has his portion in this life.”

“ What sinners value, I resign,
 Lord, ’tis enough that thou art mine ;
 I shall behold thy blissful face,
 And stand complete in righteousness.”

THURSDAY.

RICHES.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.—Matt. vi. 19—21.

THIS precept is evidently levelled against the practice of hoarding wealth. Our Lord forbids us to accumulate riches. We may “provide for our own house;” for he who, through a mistaken notion of the Christian religion, neglects this duty, “hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.”

But, while few are so perverted in judgment, as to neglect or abandon their families, from a religious motive, many, under the pretext of fulfilling the manifest duty of “providing for their own,” are, at the same time, gratifying a covetous, ambitious, worldly spirit. They love money; they love power; they love earthly honours; and hence they endeavour to accumulate wealth, perceiving that the rich man, while living, is worshipped as a divinity, by the mercenary crowd, and that, at death, he is deified as a hero who hath accomplished the noble deed of gathering together a heap of gold. The world applauds that achieve-

ment, which every one would also perform were the opportunity placed within his reach.

But, however the accumulation of wealth may be the world's idol, to me, as a Christian, "an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ," this pursuit is unlawful. It is unworthy of my "high vocation:" it is contrary to my vow of self-denial and obedience to the law.

O Lord, I beseech thee to "guide me in judgment and teach me thy law," so that while I am doing thy will, in "providing for my own," I may not be guilty of cherishing the worldly desire of "accumulating wealth." Rather let me employ my best faculties in acquiring a greater store of heavenly wisdom, and a holy preparation for leaving the precarious and unsatisfactory possessions of earth, to enter into the felicity of "the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away." There let my heart be!

FRIDAY.

EQUITY.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.—Matt. vii. 12.

The same.—Luke vi. 31

THIS precept, so "holy, just, and good," is, indeed, too often, "near in our mouth, and far from our

reins." It is universally extolled as "the golden rule," but much more praised than practised. Oh ! how many mistakes, prejudices, quarrels, law-suits, would be avoided by the application of this comprehensive test ! How forgetful, how reluctant are we to enter into the feelings and circumstances of our neighbour ! And yet what a charm—what a power is there in this law ! If the judgment is clouded by self-interest, and we are persisting in unfounded claims, how potent is the touch of this Christian law on the conscience ! Then, but not till that moment, can we discern the truth of an assertion, the equity and fairness of a claim. Let us not, therefore, "look every man on his own things" exclusively, but let us acquire the habit of looking equally at "the things of others." This will form the upright and honourable character, "lovely and of good report:" this will promote our own happiness, the welfare of others, and the honour of our good and gracious Lord, who would have us to "love one another," and "be at peace."

O Lord, my Saviour, who hast laid on me this duty, and hast given me this divine rule, pardon my past transgressions of it ; and ever enable me, in every station and circumstance of life, to cherish those equitable regards for others which I should wish them, and which they are also bound to cherish toward me !

SATURDAY.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat : this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.—Matt. xxvi. 26—28.

The same precept.—Mark xiv. 22, 23.

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.—Luke xxii. 19, 20.

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you ; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper : and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What ! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not ? What shall I say to you ? shall I praise you in this ? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup,

when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.—1 Cor. xi. 17—34.

NO. I.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE ORDINANCE.

THE most striking feature in the external form of Christianity, as delineated in the Scripture, is its simplicity. Our Lord Jesus Christ never intended to establish a system of religion complicated, burdensome, painful, and expensive. Two mystical rites, and no more, has he commanded us to observe; and our obedience may be rendered at the expense of only ~~a little~~ water, ~~a little~~ bread, and ~~a little~~ wine. Admirable simplicity, well suited to a pure, spiritual, universal religion! To such extremes, however, do men go, that the

superstitious, on the one hand, have so altered and multiplied ordinances and ceremonies, that their Christianity bears no resemblance to "the simplicity of Christ," and appears rather in the dress and fashion of "the mother of harlots," than of the pure and holy bride of the Saviour. On the other hand, the enthusiasts and speculatists have presumed to reject even the simplicity of our gospel rites, and have stripped Christianity entirely bare: no baptism, no holy supper, no sacred songs of praise, no holy Scriptures in their worship: all is hard intellect, self-sufficient reason, or wild imagination and misguided feeling. Some ~~make~~ too much of ordinances; others make too little of them. It is desirable, therefore, to possess a just idea of their intention and use. But we must previously be established in the belief of their perpetuity. To an unprejudiced mind, nothing appears more plain. It is matter of fact, that the Lord's Supper has been generally observed by Christians from the night of its institution to the present hour. This evidence, connected with the apostle's declaration, that the ordinance is designed to "show forth the Lord's death *till he come*," is surely sufficient to satisfy the humble Christian that the obligation to obey the precept, "Do this in remembrance of me," is perpetual. Strange that every heart does not eagerly embrace the duty as a privilege and a great felicity! Some, however, would deprive us of this consolation, by the argument, that the ordinance could never be designed for perpetual observance, because nature and climate present obstacles to its universality.

How shallow, how insidious ! What though some parts of the earth do not naturally afford wheaten bread and the juice of the grape, shall those parts be denied the benefits of the ordinance which *do* produce them ? But who shall presume to limit the materials to one particular kind of bread or wine ? No such limitation appears in the commandment ; and as every clime has its bread, and some vegetable capable of being converted into wine, the objection is obviated by the circumstances of the case ; and the commandment may be as truly kept in the spirit thereof, at least, in Lapland and the Tropics as in these temperate climes. But if particular kinds of bread and wine were, indeed, required by the commandment, would it not be the part of Christian charity to send to our brethren of the frigid and torrid zones that small portion of our own produce which the ordinance might require ? Where then is the valid objection to the perpetual observance of the Lord's supper by *all* Christians ? Let us rejoice in our Lord's condescension to our weakness, and thankfully accept this pledge of his kindness.

“ Well he remembers Calvary
Nor let his saints forget ! ”

SUNDAY.

No. II.

THE FORM AND DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As the holy supper was evidently designed to be a means of uniting Christians more intimately in

that love to one another, which is so strenuously enforced by our Lord, as "a new commandment," it seems peculiarly unhappy that they should have so much departed from the record on this point, as to have allowed room for such extensive schisms in the visible communion of saints. Surely the ordinance is to be observed, ~~if possible~~, as it was instituted, otherwise it will be exposed to a thousand innovations and corruptions. But, if we look to the institution of it by our Lord, or to the reiteration of it by the apostle, when correcting an abuse of the ordinance, there seems to be no difficulty as to its *form*, or as to its *design*. The Corinthians had so much departed from both as to convert it into a meal. Every one brought his own portion, of which he himself partook heartily, while his poorer brother might sit at table merely to look on. Such was neither the form nor the design of the Lord's Supper. It is clear, that the elements were ~~a~~ small portion of bread, and the same of wine, taken from the paschal supper; that each was blessed separately, hallowed by thanksgiving and prayer; and that all the disciples partook of the elements placed first by Jesus in the hands of one, and distributed, as they reclined at table, to each other in succession. Here was no altar, no sacrifice, no worship more than the pious always perform at table. The disciples were to break bread with each other, and to hand to each other a cup of wine, as a memorial of the Lord's death. The elements "show forth" the manner of his death in a lively and affecting way, by breaking the bread and pouring out the wine; so that in partaking of the

ordinance, we are led to "discern the Lord's body" as it was extended on the cross, wounded, bruised, lacerated, pierced. All the tragic story is depicted in lively colours. Repentance brings us, weeping over our sins, to blood-stained Calvary; faith lifts up her clear bright eye, and penetrating the very heavens, sees the crucified Nazarene, "on the right hand of power," "as a lamb that had been slain," yet surpassing all saints and angels in glory, "a priest on his throne," and "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

All around the holy table thinking and feeling alike, the ordinance becomes "the communion of saints," and is eminently calculated to knit the hearts of the communicants to each other.

As the Holy Scriptures are a sacred and valuable deposit from God to his church, to be guarded by them from all corruption, so also are the ordinances from all innovation. Let us, therefore, according to the apostolic injunction, "keep the ordinances as they have been delivered to us," that in their scriptural simplicity we may discern the great and solemn truths which they are designed to commemorate and distinguish as more essentially necessary to our salvation. How then can we hold communion with those who observe not the primitive order, who have added to and altered the ordinance of the supper? Shall we endure the privation of "the cup of blessing," which is "the communion of the blood of Christ?" Can we forget our duty to Christ, to the church, to our

children, to the world, to ourselves; to sanction for a moment so glaring an outrage on the authority of our blessed Lord and the privileges of the faithful? Surely they are the real *schismatics* who divide the body of Christ, and dispart the members thereof, by innovations and corruptions which destroy the primitive scriptural truth and order of the Gospel. Alas! "there must be heresies, that those who are approved may be made manifest!" May I be found a faithful guardian of the holy religion of Christ, that I may at last hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, be thou ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

MONDAY.

No. III.

DISPOSITIONS OF MIND SUITABLE TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

How terrible are the denunciations against eating and drinking the Lord's Supper "unworthily!" Having ascertained the end for which it was instituted, it is essential to our edification, and to the acceptance of our service with God, that "we keep the feast" with suitable dispositions of mind. That which is most obvious, from the commands of our Lord is,

1. To do it in remembrance of him.

When we think of coming to the table of the Lord, it should be to remember that he who "was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Condescension and pity, exceeding our highest praise! We should remember that this humiliation was on our account, that, in our nature, he might become obedient unto the law of God, and thereby bring in a perfect and "everlasting righteousness;" and while looking on the broken bread, the emblem of his crucified body, and remembering thereby the spotless obedience of the Saviour's life, meritorious and availing with the Father on our behalf, as "our righteousness;" we should consider that "he hath set us therein an ensample that we should walk in his steps." We should become more engaged to study the life of Christ, that, beholding him, we might become like him.

But when we turn our eyes to the cup, surely the sight must affect the heart! We see as it were the blood of the Lord. Memory rapidly glances over every sorrowful passage of the touching story, Gethsemane, (the garden of the oil-press,) with the prostrate Saviour, in agony of mind, under the accumulating burden of human guilt, pressing down and bruising his body, so that great drops of bloody sweat fall from it to the ground: then the treacherous kiss of Judas; the desertion of the disciples; the profane denial of Peter;

the insults, the injustice, and the cruelties of his enemies; the cry of "Crucify him! crucify him!" from the fickle, ungrateful, infuriated multitude; the heavy cross borne by the meek sufferer; the companionship of two robbers: then the rugged nails piercing his hands and his feet; the dreadful strain of the elevated cross; the exhaustion, the thirst, the inhuman mockery of the gall; the taunts and revilings of the priests and scribes: but, more than all, the piteous wailing of the Saviour, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?" And finally, the loud cry of anguish and victory, which completed the measure of suffering, and achieved our salvation! Such is the cup on which we look—which we taste; it is "the communion of the blood of Christ," and is a remembrancer of his sufferings for us. May we so partake of the sacred symbols as to remember our crucified Lord and Saviour with most fervent and grateful love!

2. *Self-examination* should precede, attend, and follow the participation of the Lord's Supper: for saith the apostle, "Let a man examine himself, and thus let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup." We are, therefore, to ascertain whether we understand the *design* of the ordinance—to honour Christ, and increase our love to him and his cause: we are to examine the *motives* which induce us to partake, and to guard against self-righteousness and pride; and especially should we look to see that no one sin be cherished in the heart.

3. *Humility* becomes every communicant of the holy supper: for, considering our great unworthiness, helplessness, and misery, and also the love of God so commended to us, by the death of his innocent and well-beloved Son, for us his enemies, we should seat ourselves at this table of the Lord, with lowly thoughts of ourselves, and with most grateful acknowledgments to our benefactor and Saviour. Serious and humble let us ever be in the observance of this sacred rite; and, meditating on the sovereign mercy of God, let us sing,

“ Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come !”

4. *Benevolent dispositions* are most suitable to this holy rite. Here we behold a provision for our spiritual necessities to our hearts' content. Nothing is wanting to make this the sum and centre of all our bliss. It is a sacred banquet, which affords the pledge and foretaste of celestial joy. We need not envy the classic poet's *noctes cœnæque deorum*: his attic wit and Falernian wine soon lost their flavour and their charm. But our sacred feast is indeed worthy of the poet's lyre; for,

“ Pleasure springs fresh for ever thence,
Unspeakable—unknown !”

With what kindly and tender feelings, then,

should we regard all our fellow-guests! Is there a "poor saint" in our communion—a fellow-heir of salvation at the same table? let us not fail to inquire how we may be serviceable to him in alleviating any sorrow, in supplying any want. Let us look around and consider to whom a personal visit may be cheering and consolatory; and let us be as liberal as possible in our contributions to the sacramental fund, which is to be distributed among the poor of the flock by the faithful hands of the ministers of Christ. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased."

5. Let us keep this feast with *unanimity*. Overlooking all minute and unimportant differences, let us avail ourselves of every opportunity of holding communion with our fellow Christians throughout the world. "Christ is not divided," though Christians live too much apart from each other. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism,"—"one body." This invisible and catholic "unity of the Spirit," we may and should cherish in our bosoms, when uniting with our Christian brethren at the supper of the Lord. Thus shall we enjoy "fellowship one with another," all confessing and exhibiting this glorious truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin."

TUESDAY.

No. IV.

THE OBLIGATION OF TRUE CHRISTIANS TO
PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

How few of those who bear the Christian name do observe this holy rite! And yet how many observe it who do not "worthily" partake of it! Some called Christians despise or neglect the ordinance: others abuse it; and too many are prevented from the observance by fear, misapprehension, or diffidence.

The apostle Paul, however, enjoins Christians to decide upon the point as a practical duty, by saying, "Let a man examine himself, and thus let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." We are not to suppose it optional whether we communicate or not. "Do this," commands our Lord. He who disobeys must answer for it at his peril. The duty is binding on all Christians "until the Lord come."

While, therefore, we must say to some, Retire from this table to your own closet, and never appear at it again, until you come with better motives: to others we must say, Come forward! Appear on "the Lord's side." "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" you confide in his atoning blood; you live in daily communion with him by prayer; you "love the brethren;" you long to have fellowship with the church:

Why then hesitate or delay? Do you reply, *I am too young?* We answer, Not if the love of Christ is in your heart. In his fold there are lambs, which he is well-pleased, as “the good shepherd,” to “take to his bosom.” Do you object, that you are *too old?* Lament that you have dishonoured the ordinance so long, and resolve, that the remaining days of life shall be devoted to the Lord Jesus. Your comfort, aged Christian, and your Saviour’s glory are both involved in your obedience.

Do you feel your *unworthiness?* This is no reason for delay. Jesus came, “not to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.” No one can render himself *worthy* of any divine privilege. You must receive this favour of admission to the Lord’s table under a deep sense of your *unworthiness*. If, therefore, this be your sentiment, your objection is your best qualification.

Are you afraid of *self-deception?* The remedy is self-examination.

Do you wait till you feel more settled in your religious character? This step will *impart* a character, and be the means of keeping you steadfast.

Are you desirous of waiting till some relative or friend shall decide upon entering into this holy fellowship, that you may sit down *together* at the table of the Lord? Beware lest this delay prove a “snare of the devil.” If your friend be long in deciding, set him the example.

Do you imagine this ordinance may be slighted, because it is *not essential to salvation?* Recollect

that it is *commanded*, and “ whosoever shall break one of the least commandments, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven :” *i. e.* he that despiseth shall be despised.

Are you apprehensive that you shall not be able to fulfil the vow of fidelity to Christ, included in the Lord’s Supper? Consider the promise : “ My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Do you tremble to encounter the reproach and scorn of the worldly and profane? Remember the awful words of the Lord : “ If any man be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.” “ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you.”

Upon the whole, there is, in truth, no valid objection that a true disciple of Christ can raise against uniting himself to the fellowship of the saints, and with them partaking of the supper of the Lord.

WEDNESDAY.

SELF-DENIAL.

Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat : because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—Matt. vii. 13, 14.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.—Matt. xvi. 24. See Luke ix. 23.

If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire.—Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

This precept recorded also by Mark, ^{ix.} 43—48.

SELF-DENIAL is the opposite of self-will; and self-will is the origin of all sin. How extensive then must be the duty here enjoined! The philosopher said, “Know thyself:” Christ said, “Deny thyself.” The life of a Christian is the highest philosophy, and far exceeds mere worldly virtue. The man of the world allows self-indulgence: the Christian practises self-denial. The Christian course commences by entering a “strait gate,” and it is continued along a “narrow” and difficult way. The morality of the Christian is strict in principle and circumspect in practice. It makes no allowance for “youthful lusts,” nor does it yield to the sinful “desires of the flesh and of the mind.” The course of the world commences by “a wide gate” of lax morality, and continues by a “broad road” of popular follies, and authorised iniquities. This is the way of the multitude. On every forehead is written self-will—self-indulgence. In full cry they are rushing down the steep in pursuit of wealth, honour, power, lux-

ury; and who can persuade the crowd to self-denial? They will load the Christian with a cross; but "they themselves will not touch it with one of their fingers."

Well, brethren in Christ, let us not envy the world, much less follow it. If we dare not—would not taste of "the pleasures of sin;" if we are called to "deny worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world;" if this become "a cross" to us by the scorn and cruelty of the world, let us embrace it, and become sincere and devoted followers of him who, for us, "endured *the* cross, and despised the shame." What is our cross to the Saviour's! And yet, though ours is much lighter, we may possess his strength to bear it. Let us press onward, then, in "the narrow path" of conscience and duty, "walking as Christ also walked." If our temptations and besetting sins are such as to require the sacrifice of a "right eye," let us pluck it out;" of a "right hand or foot," let us resolutely "cut them off, and cast them from us." By no means tamper with principle, conscience, duty. Jesus who commands, himself obeyed. Every step of this narrow way may be traced by his blood. "Ye see your calling, brethren." Your leader, your Redeemer hath gone before you, to "set you in the way of his steps." "Let no man's heart fail him," by reason of the difficulties of this course of life. "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved." Ever keep in mind, that this, and this only, "is the way that leadeth unto life."

Shall I then, O my soul! ever look back with regret on the broad road, and the profane multitude which I have forsaken? Alas! such is my weakness, such my folly, that unless thou, O Lord, shalt hold me up continually, my "faith will fail." I shall yield to the world, to the flesh, and to the devil; I shall be "as the dog returning to his vomit again, and as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end."

THURSDAY.

TRIBUTE-MONEY.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute, of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free: notwithstanding lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.—Matt. xvii. 24—27.

Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.—Matt. xxii. 21.

The same precept, Mark xii. 17.

The same precept, Luke xx. 25.

Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, (John), Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.—Luke iii. 12, 13.

Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom.—Rom. xii. 7.

JESUS, knowing that his office as a king would be liable to misapprehension by the weak, and to perversion by the designing, distinctly enjoins obedience to the civil magistrate, in all lawful things. This limitation is implied in the precept, “Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s;” for the things which are not Cæsar’s we may not render unto him. Should the civil magistrate interfere with the conscience, and require us to render to him that sacred throne of the soul, we must remember the precept which requires us to “render unto God the things that are God’s;” and, with all due respect, we must withstand, even unto death, like the martyrs, such a usurpation of the authority of God. To this end a Christian ought to study the will of God so closely, that he might be qualified to determine, as to himself at least, what are “the things of Cæsar,” and what “the things of God.”

Now tribute and custom are clearly things belonging to Cæsar; and we are bound by our religion to “pay all their dues.” Whatever tribute or custom is due, must be paid, “for the Lord’s sake.” The duty of the magistrate and of the subject is reciprocal. To the magistrate, or officer, it is said, “Exact no more than is due;”

i. e. no more than you ought: oppress not the subject by heavy imposts, or unjust exactions: the ears of the Lord of Hosts are open to the cry of the oppressed. His arm is lifted up to avenge their cause. The abuse of power—how great a sin against Him “to whom alone power belongeth,” but whose power is ever regulated by justice and mercy!

On the other hand, the duty of the subject is well defined by the Christian law; that he is to pay the tribute or custom which is due. Under a free government, the nature and the amount of these imposts are determined by the voice of the persons who are liable to pay them: and, when this right is enjoyed, there can be no ground of complaint. But, should this right be lost or counteracted, and there should be good reason to complain of the imposts made, both as to their nature and amount, the remedy is not by refusal to pay, but by petition or remonstrance; for Christians do not, by their religion, renounce or forfeit any natural or civil rights; as is clear from the conduct of the apostles at Philippi and elsewhere, claiming the privileges of Roman citizens. However, though our rights should be violated, our remonstrances despised, our petitions rejected by the higher powers, **we are not justified in withholding the tribute demanded: for, saith our Lord to Peter, “though we ought not to pay this tribute, yet, lest we should offend them, go and procure the money, and pay it for me and thee.”**

Is the tribute unjust and oppressive? commit

thy cause to the Lord, who “knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” Their account is terrible. Be thou a follower of the Lord: pay the unjust demand, and trust to that higher power which can command even the fish of the sea to pay *thee* tribute.

O God, who lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity, I beseech thee to preserve me from being accessary to any unjust impositions of tribute and custom on my fellow-men; and, when this unjust demand is made on me, enable me to comply with it in the spirit of a true disciple of Christ; more concerned lest thy cause should be scandalized, than that my rights should be preserved inviolate. Oh! dispose the hearts of all in authority to “do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God:” and may we all, both magistrates and subjects, be enabled to discharge aright our reciprocal duties, looking forward to the account of the great judgment-day!

FRIDAY.

CONCERNING FORCE IN RELIGION.

And, behold, one of them who were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the High Priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword.—Matt. xxvi. 51, 52.

By this peremptory command to the apostle Peter, we are to understand that our Lord Jesus Christ will not permit his servants to use the sword, even for defence, when their religion may expose their lives to danger; and if not for defence, certainly not for attack. The Gospel abhors the sword. The apostles never used it afterwards, though they felt its edge; and Jesus seems to have permitted the employment of it in the present instance, that he might deliver this precept upon so memorable an occasion, when, if ever, the power of the sword might have been justified. If the apostles were to "sell their garments and buy a sword," it must have been for a guard against robbers and wild beasts, which would annoy them in their journeyings through the wilderness in foreign lands; but surely could not be employed either for attack or defence in support of their religion, which enjoined them "not to resist evil," and when "smitten on one cheek to turn the other also." No; they had no need for the sword; for the apostle Paul glories in a mightier power, saying, "We do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." In such a warfare the sword and spear, the catapult and battering-ram are vain and futile. To cut off a man's ear or his head, is surely not the method to convince him either of truth or error.

Who would think of conveying a park of artillery to Persia, in order to confound the arguments of the Soofas and the Moolahs? Henry Martyn's weapons have been found more effectual there. However, were it otherwise, the interdict of Christ against the application of any physical force in support of his religion, remains the same; and strengthened, too, by the solemn prediction of awful consequences upon disobedience. How terrible are religious wars! How sanguinary—how vindictive, and yet how ineffectual! *Have* the long and bloody wars of the Crusaders wrested the holy city from the hands of the infidels?

May the force of the *divine* arms be better understood! May all endeavours to promote the kingdom of Christ in the world be conducted in the spirit of Christ! Let us ever recollect the commission given by our Lord to the apostles, to “go into all the world, and *preach* the gospel to every creature.” To this end, he

“Furnished their tongues with wondrous words
Instead of shields, and spears, and swords.”

“These weapons of the holy war,
Of what almighty force they are
To make our stubborn passions bow,
And lay the proudest rebel low.

“Nations, the learned and the rude,
Are by these heavenly arms subdued,
While Satan rages at his loss,
And hates the doctrine of the cross.

“Great King of Grace, my heart subdue,
I would be led in triumph too,
A willing captive to my Lord,
And sing the victories of his word.”

SATURDAY.

RELIGIOUS TITLES.

Be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant: and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.—Matt. xxiii. 8—12.

THIS precept is primarily addressed to the Apostles of Christ; and if rank, title, distinction, and power, on account of religion, be forbidden to them, how much more to the ordinary ~~ministers~~ of the church! Equality of rank and order is plainly laid down by our Lord as the basis of the relation and intercourse of his ~~ministers~~.—Their honours are derived from their disposition and conduct. The dignitaries of the church of Christ are not to be known by mitres, lordship, and outward pomp: the most lowly and self-abased is the most honourable. Titles and degrees may distinguish the learned; and rank and power may serve state purposes; but these things are, by this precept, prohibited in the Christian Church. Yet, alas! how ambitious have men been, in every age, since the prohibition, to acquire this religious homage and these flattering titles! One arrogates the title of “his Holiness, the Pope,” “Father of the

Universal Church;" and thinks the basest part of his person worthy enough to be presented as the object of reverential regard. Another feels himself deprived of his due if not saluted as a "Right Reverend Father in God!" Others must be "Most Reverend," ~~or~~ "Very Reverend." Some must be Cardinals, some Deans, some Doctors; a title must be obtained, or they are not on a par with the world. This secular spirit is, by the commandment, forbidden and condemned. So also is that love of party-influence and theological distinction which causes men to rejoice in being called "Rabbi!" ~~Teacher!~~ "Master!" ~~If the multitude delight in rendering this blind, superstitious worship, ministers of Christ, by receiving it, dishonour their office, and displease one who is the only Father, Master and Lord in the Church. And who, for "a puff of noisy breath," would incur this dishonour, this displeasure!~~

"Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," rather than be guilty of uttering the impious flattery; ~~and "let my right hand forget her cunning," rather than receive it with complacency!~~ "Let me not accept any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles unto man; for I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing my Maker would soon take me away."

Ah! when shall modesty, humility and brotherly kindness be accounted the highest embellishments of the christian ~~minister~~; and the emulation in the Church of Christ become inverse to that of the

* ~~Job xxxii. 21, 22.~~

world,—to be the most lowly, the most diligent, the most useful, the most meek of the whole community !

Lovely, affecting sight, to behold “ the Lord of Life and Glory,” “ equal with God,” girding himself, and performing the menial office of washing the feet of his disciples !

Tender, respectful, and constant is the love of christian ~~ministers~~ for each other, when this spirit they have imbibed—when this example they follow !

SUNDAY.

RELIGIOUS IMPOSTORS.

As he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you ; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars : see that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass ; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places : all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the

love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.—Matt. xxiv. 3—14.

If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert,—go not forth: Behold he is in the secret chambers,—believe it not; for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.—Matt. xxiv. 23—27.

And they shall say to you, See here; or, See there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.—Luke xvii. 23, 24.

And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ: and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.—Luke xxi. 8.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.—2 Thess. ii. 1—5, 15.

It is most evident, from the whole of this portion of scripture, that the disciples of Christ are in great danger of being deceived respecting the time and manner of the second coming of our Lord. That the Apostles and first Christians understood the second coming of Christ and the end of the world to be immediately connected, we may gather from the question put by some of the disciples of Christ,—“Tell us, what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world.” Jesus confirms their supposition by his answer, informing them that the end should come soon after the universal spread of the gospel.

The Thessalonians seem to have experienced much agitation of mind from forged letters and false messages, purporting to come from the Apostle Paul, as though “the coming of Christ,” or “the day of Christ,” was at hand. Had this event not been of an alarming nature, they need not have been “troubled” at the prospect. But they evidently connected “the coming of Christ,” or “the day of Christ,” with the day of judgment and the end of the world.

The unhappy Jews, despising all warnings, and rejecting the true Messiah, have been frequently deceived by false Christs: and Christians of unstable minds have many times been “deceived,” “troubled,” and “shaken in mind” by false alarms or fallacious expectations respecting the second coming of the Lord.

It is to be deeply regretted that in the present day there are such agitators as of old—such “troublers of Israel,” who are “overthrowing the faith

of some," who have not regarded the repeated cautions and warnings of Christ and his Apostles respecting the time, manner and purpose of the second advent of the Lord. Jews they are, and not Christians, in their notion of the kingdom of Christ. To be consistent, they ought to be "circumcised, and keep the law of Moses." They appear to be ignorant of the spiritual nature of Christ's reign on earth, and to have no taste for the dispensation which immediately followed the ascension of our Lord to heaven. The glory that followed his sufferings "had no glory" in their view, "by reason of the glory" of his descent from his throne in the heavens, at "the right hand of the Majesty on high," to reign in person over a few of his subjects in this lower world.

From such preposterous notions and unscriptural tenets let us at once turn away.—There are not *three* advents of the Lord. When, therefore, he shall come "*the second time*, without a sin-offering to salvation," it will be to raise the dead, to judge the human race, and to conclude the history and being of this fallen world. He will be "revealed in flaming fire." Sudden as the lightning-flash shall he appear in the clouds of heaven, with great glory. Other antecedent signs have come to pass, literally and exactly; and these *last* signs of the second advent must be looked for in like manner.

I charge thee, then, O my soul, to watch against all deception respecting the second coming of the Lord. Some entertain the notion that they shall "not see death;" but soon shall behold Jesus Christ again in the flesh, wearing an earthly

crown, on “ the throne of David.” Alas ! for such delusions ! I know full well that I *shall* die. May I but “ sleep in Jesus,” and be found among “ the dead in Christ, which shall rise first !” May I “ stand fast, and hold the traditions ” of the Lord and his Apostles, as found in the written word ! May I but endure to the end of life in a patient waiting for the coming of “ the Lord from heaven,” to receive unto himself his faithful servants, who shall then “ sit with him on his throne ” of judgment, who shall, with him, “ judge fallen angels, and the ungodly world ;” and who shall pass thence with him into “ the joy of their Lord !”

M O N D A Y.

VIGILANCE, SOBRIETY, AND PRAYER.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation : the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—Matt. xxvi. 41.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.—Ephes. v. 18.

The end of all things is at hand : be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.—1 Pet. iv. 7.

Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour ; whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

WHEN the eyes are heavy with sleep, from sorrow or fatigue, how difficult is the duty of vigilance! "The spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak." Although our tender and compassionate Lord will make all needful allowances for the infirmities of our nature, yet the duty remains unaltered: and, as our safety and happiness are involved in the performance of it, obedience is imperative. We are so placed in this world, by the will of God, that we may ever be reminded of our transitory state;—that we are passing through the country of an enemy. We are to remember,—strange illusion which perverts our view!—that our road lies through a wilderness infested by robbers and wild beasts,—that these foes are continually on the watch,—that they lie in wait for us at every turn—at every step,—that the moment we lie down to slumber they are upon us.

As a Christian, therefore, I may not think myself secure for ever, merely by faith in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and then discharge myself from the duty of watching unto prayer. Some reason themselves into so unreasonable and unscriptural a notion.—But let me beware of tempting God. Enemies are not to be conquered by slumbering and supineness. On the night when Belshazzar was banqueting luxuriously with a thousand of his lords and concubines, Babylon was taken by Cyrus. While the disciples slept Jesus was betrayed. Our duty consists in the union of vigilance with prayer: they must not be separated. To watch without prayer, would be to enter into the temptation of self-dependence:

to pray without watching would incur the guilt of presumption.

Sobriety of mind is essential to both duties. What confidence can be placed in a drunken centinel? For what duty, civil or religious, can that man be fit whose mind is oppressed and perverted by the fumes of intoxication?

O Lord, I am naturally slothful, remiss and presumptuous, grant me *thine* aid in the fulfilment of this needful duty which thou hast enjoined. May I never forget that I have to encounter an invisible enemy, who "besets me behind and before," and ravens for me as his prey. Oh that I may not be "ignorant of his devices" for my destruction! I am not, of myself, a match for his vigilance and subtlety. O Lord Jesus, intercede for me, "that my faith fail not!" Never may I consider that I have attained any thing securely, without possibility of failure, until I find myself amid the blessed spirits of the just, before the throne. As my strong, immortal vision shall be then kept attent to eternal ages, to behold the glory of the Lord, may I commence this unslumbering vigilance on earth, and consider that "the end of all things is at hand" to me—to all. O enable me to *persevere* in vigilance, sobriety of mind and prayer! I tremble at the thought of ceasing to "watch and pray."

TUESDAY.

WORLDLY CARE.

No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature ? And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (For after all these things do the gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—Matt. vi. 24—34. Luke xii. 22.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—Luke xii. 32.

Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.—Philip. iv. 6.

OH that we could live according to this sublime precept! What a life of ease, dignity, and independence does our Lord propose and ordain!—A life without anxious care: a life employed mainly in religious and benevolent duties: a life unencumbered with the numerous burdens of *to-morrow*!

“Where is *to-morrow*? In another world.” Human-life is but one short day. The past is gone, never to return: the future is not, and may never be: only the *present* day—the *present* hour is life. What then are my wants for *one day*? They need not be multiplied. “Sufficient for *the day*,” present, “is the evil thereof.” How liable are we to oppress our minds with *prospective* cares and troubles, burdens and difficulties; and thus to unfit ourselves for the proper discharge of *present* duties.

Strengthen me, I beseech thee, O Lord, against unbelief, impatience and discontent; and so increase my faith in thy word and providence, that I may attain to this life of dependence on thee for my “daily bread” and “deliverance from evil.” In every season of want or difficulty, I will, henceforth, “let my requests be made known unto God.” From the sin and folly of endeavouring to serve both God and mammon, ever preserve me. Let not the world divide my heart with thee. Be thou my only “Master and Lord.” “With my whole heart,” I would serve thee: “O teach me thy commandments.” May I truly believe that “man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, doth man live.”

W E D N E S D A Y.

RECONCILIATION.

If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way : first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.—Matt. v. 23, 24.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him ; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing —Matt. v. 25, 26.

When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him, lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite. — Luke xii. 58, 59.

“ YIELDING pacifieth great offences,” saith the wisdom of God by Solomon. This is all the Lord himself requires from us when we have offended him, and this he prescribes to us for offences against our brethren. How many feuds, how many law-suits, how many crimes might be prevented by this temper ! Yet, alas ! such is the pride, such the obstinacy of human nature, that it will not hear justice, truth, reason : no, it will, though in the wrong, and consciously so, yet resist to the uttermost. The iron-handed officer of justice, the lion-faced judge, the dark and loathsome dungeon,

subdue not the soul filled with pride, passion, and self-will.

Oh let me ever hear the voice of reason, truth and mercy speaking in these Divine commands. May I be delivered from a stubborn and implacable temper! Let me consider it always most honourable, as it is most safe and prudent, to yield when in the wrong, and that in due time, lest a pertinacious resistance should aggravate the offence. And above all, let me not resist God! May he never say of me as of the house of Israel, "I know that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass!" "I have stretched forth my hands all day long, unto a disobedient and gain-saying people." How dreadful to have God for an adversary;—to be delivered up to the tormentors;—to be doomed by him to pay "the uttermost farthing!"

Let me now, in my secret retirement, endeavour to recollect whether any one "hath ought against me." Whom of my brethren have I offended, and it yet remains to make acknowledgment of my offence for reconciliation? With whom, through pride or passion, am I at disagreement? Before I presume to approach the altar of God with the sacrifices of prayer and praise, let me, according to the Divine command, go straight to my brother and make my acknowledgment: then will I return to my closet and offer the gift of an humble penitent, seeking, with the "Sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart," through the blood of the cross, the forgiveness of God for my opposition to his will, and supplicating the grace of his Spirit that I may,

for the future, strive against sin—against my “easily besetting sin.” If I am naturally proud and passionate, ready to give, as well as to take offence, O “God of all grace,” grant unto me the grace of humility. May I no longer resist thee! May I be entirely “reconciled to thee by the death of thy Son!” Take away all enmity whatever from my heart, and bless me with the spirit of meekness and true charity, that I may indeed follow the steps of him who did “not strive nor cry, nor make his voice to be heard in the streets:” who, far from giving just offence to any, patiently “endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.” Then may I set the Lord Jesus, “meek and lowly in heart,” always before me! Thus, also, shall I “not be moved.”

THURSDAY.

LOVE OF THE WORLD.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—1 John ii. 15—17.

By distinguishing “the world” from “the things that are in the world,” we are evidently to under-

stand that "the men of the world" are not to engage our love. With them we may, and we must, have many engagements and daily intercourse; and, while we render to them civility and courtesy as men, our *friendship* is to be reserved for those who are "not of the world, but of God." We are expressly told by the apostle James, that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever, therefore, *will* be a friend of the world is the enemy of God," These are awful words! Surely we cannot probe our hearts too deeply if we would yield obedience to this solemn precept! If I love the world, the love of the Father is not in me. Who then has my heart? Do I give myself up to sensual desires? Do I covet all the good things that my eyes behold? Am I inflated with the pride of wealth? Do I ostentatiously display my possessions, and make them my vain-glorious boast? All this "is not of the Father, but is of the world."

How then may I know the actual state of my heart? Surely the clew is given by the apostle, when he says, "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Obedience is, indeed, the true and only test of love. "If ye love me," says the Saviour, "keep my commandments." Can I then, appealing to him who knoweth all things, say, "Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway even unto the end?"* How sublime a duty

* Psalm cxix. 111, 112.

—to “do the will of God!” Who is sufficient for it? “Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.” This will counteract and eradicate “the love of the world.”

FRIDAY.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S MERCIES.

And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him.—Mark v. 18—20.

THE earnest request of the liberated demoniac to be with his deliverer and Saviour was indeed very natural; and doubtless the grateful affection by which it was prompted was very acceptable to Jesus: but in this world we are not to be intent on our own ease and gratification, even in lawful and spiritual enjoyments: instead of such indulgence, activity and zeal may be the dutiful course which is pointed out to us. Having received signal mercies from the Lord, it becomes us with joy to tell to others, especially to our friends and relatives, “how great things the Lord

hath done for us;" what "compassion he hath had on us." Thus shall we glorify God and his Son, our Lord and Saviour: and after a life spent in this service we shall be permitted to live with our blessed benefactor, to see his face every day, to enjoy his smiles and favours in a world of eternal rest.

While on earth let me circulate and publish the tidings of divine goodness and power, as displayed in *me*. May this testimony lead my friends and neighbours to the Saviour of my soul! Thus will his honour be advanced and my happiness greatly increased. Let it then, while here, be my greatest pleasure to be employed in performing this duty!

I hear some, indeed, very loud in their expressions of gratitude, who yet, by their temper and lives, do not justify their professed experience. It is but too possible to say, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are," while supercilious pride looks askance on the humble, contrite, confessing penitent, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Surely, while we cherish most sincere and fervent gratitude to our benefactor, we should be upon our guard against vanity, haughtiness, and self-conceit! How odious, in a hospital of the sick and dying, that any patient on receiving a cure, and leaving his companions, should, as he passes by and beholds them writhing in pain, weeping and distressed, cast a scornful look around, and say, or think, "Ah miserable creatures, lie there and die as you deserve! See how much I am

favoured! How well God thinks of me! In how great esteem does the Physician hold me above you all!" What can be conceived more odious than such a spirit? Might not such a convalescent deserve to be smitten with a worse disease than before, and sent back with vengeance to his pallet, a monument of the Divine displeasure against proud and selfish gratitude and hypocritical thanksgiving?

Let us, then, remember the precise duty enjoined on the demoniac,—to declare to friends, relatives, neighbours, on all proper occasions, and never, at any time, to hold back our testimony from fear or false shame, concerning the benefits, spiritual or temporal, which the Lord may have conferred upon us. On the one hand, to avoid vain and self-righteous boasting of our election, pardon, comfort, or joy:—and, on the other, to watch against a timid, ungrateful silence or reserve, equally injurious to ourselves, unkind and unjust to other sufferers, and dishonourable and offensive to our divine Lord and Saviour,—to whom be rendered "Salvation and glory and honour, and power, for ever." Amen!

SATURDAY.

HEARING THE WORD.

He saith unto them, *Take heed what ye hear*: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear, shall more be given: For he that hath, to

him shall be given : and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.—Mark iv. 24, 25.

Take heed how ye hear ; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.—Luke viii. 18.

Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.—1 Thess. v. 20, 21.

Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.—1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.—1 Cor. iv. 6.

Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby : if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.—1 Peter ii. 1—3.

THE apostle Peter describes, most graphically, the earnest longing of a new convert after divine truth ; and charges it as a duty on all Christians, that they should cherish this desire, stating the end for which it should be entertained,—that we may *grow* by “ the sincere milk of the word.” It is, then, the great duty of a Christian to “ increase in the knowledge of God.” “ Faith cometh by hearing : hearing, by the word of God.” This method of public instruction, by the ministry of the word, being the appointed means for the edification of the Church, our Lord commands his disciples, that they “ despise not prophesyings,” or interpreta-

tions and expositions of scripture by the ministers of the word. Many who are “wise in their own conceit,” but really ignorant, and “know nothing, as they ought to know,” affect to despise all instruction:—should they not tremble to think how despicable they will appear another day, when the Lord shall require an account of their talents?

It is our privilege, as it is our duty, to hear the word. But how much depends on the disposition with which we hear it, so that the end of hearing may be accomplished, and “that we may grow thereby,”—producing abundantly “the fruits of the Spirit?”

Hence our Lord enjoins us to “take heed *what* we hear.” If we are indifferent to truth or error;—if we can listen to that which is false or frivolous, or at best irrelevant to the soul, we shall be in danger of losing our power to discern, or to value the truth of God. To those who hear aright shall more knowledge, faith, understanding, judgment, love, and spiritual strength be given. God expects us to use diligently the faculties which he has imparted. Intent, therefore, on knowing what is “the mind of the spirit” in the word, that we may do the will of God; and avoiding all error and fanaticism, let us not blindly surrender our judgment and conscience to any man; but, according to the commandment, “prove all things” said or preached, by the only infallible standard of truth—the holy scriptures: whatever doctrine will endure this test is “good,” and we must “hold it fast:”—the chaff must be given to the winds.

In order to obey one command of Christ we must previously obey another: we must also take heed *how*, as well as *what*, we hear. To be drowsy and listless under the ministry of the word will either deprive us of all benefit from the ordinance, or will make us the easy prey of mental fallacies and sinister designs. We are warned in the Scriptures against "the sleight-of-hand and cunning craftiness" of some public instructors of religion, who "lie in wait to deceive." Christ says, "Beware of men." Satan frequently transforms himself into "an angel of light," to give authority and plausibility to pernicious and pestilential errors. "Let no man," saith the faithful and holy Paul, "glory in men." He claimed not any homage for his own superior knowledge, or for the sacred eloquence of Apollos, "above what was written." Even their own inspired writings must judge themselves in the last day. To the written law and testimony must every appeal be made. Popes, councils, synods, fathers, all must bow to the *written* word.

Alas! how little deference has been shown for these commands!—How are Christians "puffed up for one" minister against another!—The idol of the day tossed upon the frothy wave of popular applause, and spent with unnatural exertions to please and win the fretful, fickle element, sinks suddenly into the opening gulph of its displeasure, and another rises in his place, to be succeeded by another and another,—all, alike, unheeding the wise and salutary command of God, "who will not give his glory to another."

“Why look ye on us,” said the Apostles, as though we had done any thing by our own power and holiness? “Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?” While this spirit remained in the Church its integrity was unbroken. But when men, “having itching ears, heaped to themselves teachers,” schisms and sects were the natural result.

Let me, then, turn from men, O Lord, to thee! While I would thankfully receive from the hands of thy holy and faithful ministers that spiritual aid which thou hast ordained that they should impart to thy people, may I ever render to thee “the glory due unto thy name.” “Neither is he that planteth, any thing, neither he that watereth, but only thou, O God, who givest the increase!” O “let THY WORD be magnified above all thy NAME.”

SUNDAY.

FAITH.

While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain who said, Thy daughter is dead : why troublest thou the master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, *Be not afraid, only believe.*—Mark v. 35, 36.

Have faith in God ; for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall

come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith ; Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.—Mark xi. 22—24.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)—John vii. 37—39.

Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me.—John xiv. 1.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me : or else believe me for the very work's sake.—John xiv. 11.

Then he (the jailer) called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said : Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.—Acts xvi. 29—31.

The Spirit and the Bride say come ; and let him that heareth say come ; and let him that is athirst come : and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.—Rev. xxii. 17.

FEAR is the great hindrance to faith ; and fear is the great result of faith : but these fears are of different kinds : fear arising from guilt, from imperfect or erroneous views of God, from doubt of his power and grace, is indeed sinful, and must be removed, ere we can exercise “ faith in God.” On the other hand, a reverence for the word and name of God, a fear of offending him, a fear of coming short of heaven by indolence or presumption, is a fear most holy, and salutary, and honour-

able to God : it is, therefore, called “godly fear.” This is the very product of faith.

Our duty, then, is to chase away the fear of unbelief, and cherish faith in the power, faithfulness, and goodness of God ; recollecting that Jesus commanded us “not to be afraid, but to believe”—to “have faith in God.” Oh ! what power is there in genuine faith ! “only believe,” for “all things are possible to him that believeth.” Well might the disciples say, “Lord, increase our faith ! well may we repeat the prayer ! This is the key that unlocks heaven’s treasury. How can he be poor and wretched, who is possessed of faith ? “Having nothing,” with this divine grace, we yet “possess all things.” Whatever we want for ourselves or others, we have but to “ask in faith, nothing doubting,” and it shall be done. Christ has given us his solemn pledge for it :—there let my faith rest ; there let it lean with all its weight.

His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies :
The voice that rolls the stars along,
Spake all the promises.

Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines,
Nor can the powers of darkness raze
Those everlasting lines.

But, while I cherish this undoubting faith, let me also remember that, “had I the faith which can remove mountains, while destitute of love, I am nothing.” “Faith worketh by love.” Ad-

mirable! We have here, as it were, the Christian microcosm, all the symbols of "the new man in Christ Jesus," his intellectual, moral, practical life; faith, love, works—"a threefold cord, not quickly broken."

Our Lord Jesus connects devotion with faith; that is, heaven with earth, and God with man. What shall be denied to "the prayer of faith?" "It shall save the sick; and, if he have committed sins, they shall," in answer to this prayer, "be forgiven him." Time would fail to recite the wonders effected by "the prayer of faith."

Some will, however, demur here, and ask, where do we *now* behold these splendid effects! Are we warranted in the application of these promises to ourselves, in these remote times? Are not, in fact, many prayers of good men, "full of faith," unanswered? Is it not presumptuous and dangerous to suppose, that whatever we persuade ourselves we shall have for asking, it shall, without exception, be granted? Might we not ask for many things injurious to ourselves and others, and displeasing to God? Might we not, for example, with the two sons of Zebedee, ask that we might "sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, of Jesus, when he cometh in his kingdom?" Undoubtedly we might; and in these things we might offend. But would this be "the prayer of faith?" Nay, it would rather be the prayer of vain and worldly ambition, of weakness and folly. True faith could not persuade itself that such a petition was certainly agreeable to God, and would certainly be granted.

As all the Christian graces move in chorus, humility would admonish faith to ask for something more undoubtedly agreeable to the divine will, and more certainly beneficial to the soul.

This precept with its promise may, confessedly, be abused. One can suppose a mere religious sensualist, acting thereon, and preferring his gross prayers for wealth and luxury. But this case is already determined in the books. The apostle James says to such, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." When the wicked pray, it is "with a wicked mind," that God may gratify wicked desires.

But shall this abuse of the promise "make the faith of God of none effect" in the case of the righteous? God forbid! Elijah opened and shut heaven with his prayers; and still "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

It may yet be objected, notwithstanding, that the earnest prayers of good men are sometimes not granted. This it may be difficult to prove. Appearances may deceive us. The providence of God is too mysterious for us to fathom, and we must not "judge the Lord by feeble sense—but trust him for his grace." "A thousand years are with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years." We do not live long enough here to see whether our prayers or the prayers of others are really answered or not. The answer may come in "the third or fourth generation," after we have "passed the way of all flesh."

“ Let God be true, though every man should be found a liar.” Hath he said it, and will he not do it?

It is true that in some particular instance, God might see it right to deny our special and earnest request. There may be such exceptions; but are they to nullify the general rule, or to confirm it? Yet in the case of the exception, may we not still trust in the wisdom, faithfulness, loving-kindness of God our Saviour? Can he, in any case, “ deny himself?” We have two such remarkable exceptions on record in the Holy Scriptures. The apostle Paul informs us that he “ besought the Lord thrice that his affliction might depart from him:” doubtless with much earnestness, humility, and faith. It pleased God not to grant his request; but was the denial an evidence of displeasure? far from it. What liege and loving subject would not rejoice, as the apostle did, to bear the affliction, so long as he should receive this royal and gracious assurance, “ my favour is sufficient for thee?” Well may we endure the “ thorn in the flesh,” or the buffetings of Satan’s messenger, while sustained by the countervailing grace of God. It was most evident that the apostle was well content with this kind denial; for a greater favour was conferred: he received all needful strength to bear his infirmity; and his “ joy in the Lord through the abundance of the revelations,” exalted him not unduly. Thus his painful affliction becoming a real blessing, he was not desirous to lose it.

The other instance is yet more remarkable: even

the Son of God himself was once denied his request. "Father, if it be possible," said the agonized "man of sorrows," in the garden, "let this cup pass from me." Oh! had that prayer been granted! But while it was not possible that it should be granted, and the burning draught must be drunk, to the last dregs, "the joy set before him" by ministering angels, so cheered and animated his fainting spirit, that he "endured the cross, despised the shame, and is therefore, now seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Surely he who is "the author and finisher of faith" enjoys now in his glory, far greater felicity from the denial of his prayer, than he would have done from compliance with it.

If, then, O Lord God, most wise and holy, and good and true, it be thy will to refuse my earnest petition; even though it should be "the prayer of faith," I will not entertain hard thoughts of thee, nor like one under such a trial, who vowed he would never ask more, "restrain prayer before thee." I will rather wait for some gracious compensation from the store of thy abundant favour, treasured up in Christ Jesus my Lord, and say, "not my will, but thine, be done." I will believe that the exuberance of thy goodness will not permit me to lack any *good* thing: that what I deem good, may be really hurtful; and that it is my happiness to confide in thy wisdom, as well as in thy promises.

M O N D A Y.

TREATMENT OF ENEMIES.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy: But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so!—Matt. v. 43—48. See Luke vi. 27, 28, 35.

Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man* that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.—Luke vi. 29, 30.

Love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful. Luke vi. 35.

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—Rom. xii. 17—21.

* i. e. Withhold not assistance from *an enemy* if he ask it.

No point in our divine religion affords a more striking contrast to the spirit and maxims of the world, than that which relates to the treatment of our enemies. What dictate of human nature, more natural, more universal, more generally allowed and practised, than this:—"thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy?" When David, anticipating the Christian command, dealt mercifully with Saul, sparing the life of his cruel persecutor, which had been providentially put into his power, his conduct appeared so extraordinary to Saul, that he could not forbear exclaiming, "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil; and thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me; forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not: for if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?"

In the dispensation of Moses, when many things were "suffered because of the hardness of men's hearts," this conduct on the part of David was an exception to the common sentiments and behaviour even of the sacred nation. But, under the new covenant, what before was made the exception, is therein made the general rule. One who has obtained a great reputation as a **Christian** moralist, could allow himself to say: "I love a good hater." But, from the precept of **Jesus** we learn, that no man is to be hated—not even an enemy. If hatred of any human being were admissible, it might surely be justified in the case of an enemy. Against Saul of Tarsus, "breathing

out threatenings and slaughter," like an infuriated wild beast, the Christians of Jerusalem and Damascus, one would have thought, might have been forgiven for expressing the natural feeling of hatred, as a violent and malignant enemy. But Christianity is from above, not from beneath: it is diverse from all other religions, all other codes of morality, in many important points; and in none more than in rendering good for evil to an enemy.

It may be objected, however, is it possible to love an unlovely object? Am I commanded to love sin in the form of malice, bigotry, cruelty, falsehood, injustice, pride? Is not this to be commanded to love the image of the wicked one, the children of the devil?

If this were the just interpretation of the command, to "love your enemies," then, indeed, the objection would seem difficult of removal, and it would be truly a "hard saying." But this is clearly not the intention of our divine lawgiver; for he explains his meaning by adding, "bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." In this manner shall we exhibit a spirit of forgiveness and mercy, and imitate therein our heavenly Father, who loves his enemies, which, alas! are the greater part of mankind. In return, however, for their wilful ignorance, contempt, stubbornness, ingratitude, with all other nameless crimes, he sends them the cheering sun, the fruitful rain; so that, to look merely on the surface of providence, one would

suppose that really "all things come alike to all;" ~~that~~ "one event happeneth to the righteous and the wicked;" or rather, that the men of the world were the favourites of God; and the greater the rebellion against his authority, the greater the reward for contumacy and resistance. Great indeed is the mystery of the divine patience. Awful must be the guilt that can abuse it. That, however, rests on the heads of those who know not the day of their visitation. Our duty is to imitate the divine forbearance and generosity, as the children of God. In every case of insult, injury, or persecution as Christians, we are to render good for evil. Nor may we entertain *thoughts* of vengeance or retaliation. If we venture to take the law into our own hands, God will justly leave us to cope with our enemies by ourselves, and then more will they be who are against us, than those who are for us. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." What Christian would wish his righteous cause in better hands? If it were proper to meditate vengeance, to what power so great, so dread, could we commit the work of retribution? But, "vengeance is mine, I will repay;"—leave that, my children, my servants, my subjects, entirely to me, "saith the Lord." Your enemies are my enemies, and I shall deal with them as seemeth good to me. Your part is to pity them, to pray for them, and to forgive them. Conquer them, not by fleshly weapons and worldly arms. Fight your enemy with deeds of charity: seize the moment of his want or weakness, not to crush, but to help him. Heap favours on him,

and thus vanquish, consume him with inward shame and remorse, ~~and thus to subvert, and~~
~~the effort from him the confession that~~
~~the glorious than~~

These are exploits worthy of the Christian name. To render evil for evil, is to follow the course of this world, and the dictates of an unrenewed, degenerate mind. But to "overcome evil with good," is to imitate the divine nature, and to exhibit before men a miniature image of the Most High God. *It is to reveal the world of Christ.*

Let us then utterly and for ever renounce the base and malignant desire of avenging ourselves. Let us act so as to *deserve* no enmity: but, as "they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution," let us uniformly commit ourselves, in such circumstances, to the Lord, in strict obedience to his commands, and trust the issue with him.

J.

HUMILITY.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones : for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. —Matt. xviii. 10.

And he sat down, and called the twelve, (who had been disputing among themselves, who should be the greatest,) and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the

same shall be last of all, and servant of all.—Mark ix. 35.

He put forth a parable to those who were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xiv. 7—11.

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.—Luke xvii. 10.

I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith: or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching: or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.—Rom. xii. 3—8.

Mind not high things; but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit.—Rom. xii. 16.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.—1 Cor. iii. 18.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.—2 Cor. x. 17. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.—1 Pet. v. 5—7.

WHAT is so becoming to man as humility? Out of the ground was he taken, and to the earth shall he return. It is fit, therefore, that he should bow downward to his native element, in lowly thoughts of himself, and in token of subjection to his Maker, who formed him from the dust. Hence the Christian law requires that we should be “clothed with humility.” Whatever our gifts, virtues, or attainments, all should be gracefully covered with this lovely robe. Thus arrayed we shall attain to honour and esteem. Yet true humility is rare; the semblance and profession of it are to be found every where: but, alas! how little of the reality, when profession is put to the test! The precepts of our Lord on this head, being adapted to real life, supply that test. How ready are we, for example, to despise “little ones” in the Church of Christ! What conceit of our superior knowledge and attainments! What desire for pre-eminence among our brethren! How ready to say; “stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:” forgetting that the least and lowest of our brethren are waited on by “angels,” who are always looking at the face of their heavenly Father, watching his eye and his hand for signals of his will on

behalf of these “little ones” here below. If, then, we would emulate the honours of the angels, we must become “last of all, and servant of all.”

Rank is one of the most desirable acquisitions in the esteem of the world. It is even more regarded than wealth. What then is the Christian's rank?—the lowest place. The ambition of Christians is to be retrograde to that of the world. Vain and selfish persons desire to be placed in the most conspicuous and convenient places on all public occasions: the amiable contention of Christians is for the lowest place; each in honour preferring his brother; not with the hollow form of politeness, that inwardly grudges the precedence which it outwardly yields gracefully and with flattering compliments and smiles; but with the sincerity of affection and esteem.

This lowliness of mind will make us feel at ease, should our real merits be neglected or undervalued. But if, from due esteem, we hear it said to us, “friend, go up higher,” we shall enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that we possess the honourable regard of our brethren. This mutual concession will adjust all in their proper places, and preserve the beautiful order and propriety of our social intercourse.

To fulfil these precepts, it is necessary that a man should obtain a just idea of his own character. Humility does not consist in a false opinion of ourselves; not in the use of self-degrading epithets, but in the exercise of lowly thoughts. By regarding continually the high standard of Christian perfection, and comparing with it our de-

ficient performances, there will be always reason enough within us for cherishing such self-abasing sentiments. Yet it would be unjust to the grace of God, to deny its operation in us, and to speak or think of ourselves as if we were "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Who more humble than that servant of Christ, who, acknowledging himself "the chief of sinners," yet deemed himself not behind the very "chief of the apostles."

Let us, therefore, steadily proceed in our Christian course, "going on unto perfection;" diligent in every duty, public and private, "serving the Lord;" remembering that we "have nothing but what we have received; that if we "have gifts differing" in nature or importance from others, it is "according to the grace that is given to us;" and that if "much is given, much will be required." Were we not in danger of "thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think," so many cautions would not be left on record. The recollection of our dependence and responsibility tends to correct this vanity and self-conceit; and when we have done our best, and even should we have "done all those things which are commanded us," there is no room for boasting. We have no independent and absolute merit. We must after all say from the heart, "we are unprofitable servants; we have done only that which was our duty to do." If we boast, let it be only to exalt and magnify the grace of God in us; and let us even in this rejoicing be careful that, insensibly, it does not slide into self-sufficiency

and vain-glory. Let us judge by our inward sense of self-abasement of the sincerity of our outward demonstrations and professions. "Let no man deceive himself:" he cannot deceive the "Searcher of hearts."

Awful things are spoken against the proud. "The Lord will cut out the tongue that speaketh proud things." "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off." "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud." "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Can we conceive, then, of a proud Christian; one "whose eyes are lofty, and his eye-lids are lifted up?" Is it possible that such a person can obey these commands? Will he not "despise little ones;" push himself into the highest places; boast of his gifts and possessions? Can he "condescend to men of low estate?" Can he be "subject to another?" All this requires humility of mind.

The eminent and highly gifted Pascal, though born to affluence, as he drew toward the close of his short and brilliant career, identified himself much with the poor; and, on his death-bed, intreated his friends to convey him to an hospital, that he might die among them.

PRAYER FOR HUMILITY.

O LORD GOD, who dost resist the proud, and give grace to the humble, how justly mightest

thou withstand me in my way, as thou didst the prophet bent on his covetousness ! In my self-will I am too much allied to him who was condemned and cast down from heavenly bliss through pride. I would have dethroned thee from my heart, that I might reign alone ; and I have even said, in my thoughts and ways—" who is the Lord that I should obey him ?" Pardon, I beseech thee, this self-sufficiency and pride, for the sake of the meekness and lowliness of thy blessed and all-perfect Son Jesus, in whom was no sin. Henceforth may I receive strength to conquer pride in every outward form and expression ; but much more in every inward feeling and thought, for thou " lookest at the heart." In the height of prosperity, may I be truly humble, affable, and condescending. May the greatest elevation of rank, wealth, or power, be the most faithful monitor to my soul, to abase me in my own sight, and may it daily and hourly say to me, remember that thou art a mortal man, and owest all to God : employ all for his glory. In adversity may the dross of vanity and self-dependence be thoroughly purged away, and may I come forth from the furnace of affliction, bright as gold, " seven times purified." Thus may I be fitted for that world where holy angels veil their faces, while they bow before thee, saying : " Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen."

W E D N E S D A Y.

TRESPASSES BETWEEN CHRISTIAN
BRETHREN.

If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And, if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.—Matt. xviii. 15—17.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins —James v. 16–20.

How clearly does our Lord lay down the law to regulate our conduct, in case of personal offence between Christian brethren! How wise, how kind, how equitable is this law! As “the beginning of strife is like the letting out of water,” care is taken to prevent the ebullition and overflow of

angry or vindictive feelings. The matter must not be brooded over for weeks and months, but must be immediately settled by explanation and reconciliation. The offended party is charged, in case of personal and private offence, to go to his offending brother, to tell him his fault. Secrecy is, in the first instance, required, that the truth may be ascertained, and apology or reparation made for the offence. How wise a provision for the prevention of further trespasses and for healing the breach! How different from the usual course of procedure! How ready are we rather to tell every neighbour, relative, and friend, of the offence committed against us, before we think of complaining of it to the offender himself! Yet the precept clearly requires us, as much as possible, to avoid the publication of the fault. Rather than expose the offender to the censure of the congregation, the interposition of friends is to be obtained. Obdurate indeed must that heart be which shall resist all these kind endeavours to effect reconciliation and peace. Such a case, however, is here implied; and, when all private efforts have failed to convince the offender and bring him to repentance, the last resort is in that assembly of the faithful to which he may belong by profession, but of which he proves himself so unworthy. In the full meeting of the congregation the matter is to be told by the offended party: there every word is to be established by proper evidence; and, should he prove so extremely obstinate and disorderly as to refuse to submit to the determination of the assembly, he

must be left to the discipline which the Lord has provided for the honour and purity of the society which bears his hallowed name: the offended party is under the necessity of renouncing all friendly intercourse with him, and all religious fellowship.

The offender, is, moreover liable to excommunication from the congregation of the faithful. Our Lord prescribes no fine, torture, or imprisonment; but the punishment inflicted is in itself far more terrible. The offender, being cut off from the congregation of the Lord, is thereby placed in a most critical situation: he is marked out as an enemy to the peace of the brethren, a rebel against the authority of the Lord, self-willed and impenitent, and again ready to offend. It becomes, therefore, the Lord's quarrel, and happy will the pertinacious offender be if "the spirit shall be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," at the expense of "the destruction of the flesh," to which he may be given up.* How much better

* Illustrative of this procedure the following instance is taken from the "Polynesian Researches," by Mr. Ellis.

"Associated with these delightful duties, viz. pastoral visitations—there were others equally needful, but less pleasing, which we were called to discharge, in connexion with the infant church which we had been honoured to gather. These were acts of discipline in the dismissal of those who, by their conduct, had disgraced the Christian profession. On these occasions, we presented to their consideration, the direction of the Scriptures and the duty of the church resulting therefrom; and when it was necessary to dismiss an individual from fellowship, it was always done with solemn prayer, and most affecting regret.

if we have offended, to obey the injunction of Christ by his servant, the apostle James, and "confess our faults one to another?" Only confess! Yet some appear as if they would even go down to the torments of the damned, rather than confess their faults. What awful pride! How fit are they, in such a state of mind, for that place which was "prepared for the devil and his angels!" Much do they need the prayers and the efforts of "the spiritual to restore them in the spirit of meekness."

O Lord, be pleased to grant unto me such self-command that I may neither wittingly trespass against a brother, nor be "easily provoked," "soon angry," and ready to take offence. Yet if, unhappily, I have given just cause of offence by my acrimonious temper, or unseemly conduct, may I be ready to receive my offended brother with open arms as my kind and worthy friend, a mes-

"We were not called to this painful duty soon or often. One or two instances occurred, before I removed to the Sandwich Islands. They were, however, exceedingly distressing, especially the first, which preyed so constantly on the mind of the individual, that, though fully convinced of his fault and the propriety of the proceeding, he never recovered the shock he received. It was exceedingly painful to those who could no longer, without dishonouring the Christian name, allow him to be identified with them, to separate him. He soon offered every evidence of deep and sincere penitence, and was affectionately invited to return to the bosom of the church: but, although he came again among them, a cloud ever after hung over him: and a disease, aggravated by mental anxiety, now attacked his frame, and soon brought him to the grave."—Vol. ii. pp. 336, 337.

senger of Christ, his servant, his officer, bringing with him the law of trespass to execute, according to the prescribed order. Let me rejoice in such a brother in Christ; and by the frankness of my confession, and the sincerity of my repentance, immediately convince him, that he may again confide in me. May I be thankful for such leniency shown to me, a sinner; and, by immediate and timely submission, prevent the progress of the suit commenced. O Lord, be pleased to take away this heart of adamantine pride, and give to me “a heart of flesh,” tender and susceptible—“a conscience void of offence toward both God and man.” Dispose all professed Christians to obey this law of trespass; or rather may they all be so imbued with “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” that trespasses between Christian brethren shall be known only by historical record, and not by actual experience.

THURSDAY.

CHASTITY.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members

should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.—Matt. v. 27—30.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body : but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—1 Cor. vi. 18—20.

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication : that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour ; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God : for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.—1 Thess. iv. 1—7.

“ BLESSED are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “ The law is spiritual,” and taketh cognizance of the thoughts, as well as of the open act. “ The Lord searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.” “ There is not a thought in my heart, but lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.” Alas ! “ if thou wert strict to mark iniquity, who, O Lord, could stand ?” Who is clean from these transgressions ? Who has not been guilty of impure looks, thoughts and words, if not of impure

deeds? And what soul of man is not by these holy precepts condemned? Some, indeed, pride themselves on their chastity; with little reason, if their hearts could be seen, as God seeth them. But, in truth, such is the universal prevalence of unchastity in all its hateful forms, that one cannot take up a stone to cast at his neighbour.

How many professed Christians live in the *open* violation of these Christian laws! How many transgress *in secret*! Am I of this number; or are these things abominable to me? If I ever loved, encouraged, or practised them, are they *now* my abhorrence? Do I check and oppose the impure *thought*, or do I permit it to settle in my imagination and to dwell upon my lips? If tempted, do I lend the eye or the hand, to the tempter, or rather, “pluck out” the one, and “cut off” the other? Do I sternly refuse these members as an accomplice with the devil? Do I parley with the enemy, and stay to argue the matter, or do I avoid this snare, by keeping quite within the citadel of holy thoughts, devout exercises, self-denial, useful occupations, lawful society, and self-diffidence? Let me not be found idling upon the walls, or on the house-top! Warned by the sad example of the King of Israel against the effects of a single glance of the eye; and animated by the noble and virtuous conduct of the steward of Potiphar, may I learn to flee an impure thought, as from the face of a serpent, and haste to escape from the snare of meretricious beauty and the solicitations of impure and unlawful desire.

How reasonable are the laws of Christ! What sufficient arguments are appended to the commands! Our own eternal safety and happiness; our high and honourable character; and the will of God, that we should resemble himself in holiness.

And, as a rational creature, can I hear from the lips of this heavenly expositor of the law of God, that impure desires are in the esteem of the law-giver, as really sinful as the mature action; and equally expose the transgressor to everlasting perdition; and still permit unchaste looks, and secret emotions of evil to range without control and without dread of consequences? That, surely, is no evidence of rationality, but of besotted folly.

And what an argument is addressed to the Corinthians? “What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?” Is it indeed so, that *my* body is the temple of God? What then can I expect but that, if I presumptuously defile the temple of God, even with impure thoughts, the Holy Spirit will not only depart from me, but destroy the temple of my body, thus desecrated and rendered unfit for a celestial resident?

Let not, then, the flesh ever prevail against the spirit, to obtain even audience for impure words, or sufferance for impure ideas. Am I besought, exhorted, commanded, that, as I have received instruction, “how I ought to walk and to please God, I should abound more and more?” Am I expressly told that “this is the will of God, even my sanctification;” that “God hath not called us

to uncleanness, but unto holiness;" how extremely base, vile, and ungrateful must I be to cherish even a *thought* displeasing to the purity of the "High and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," and who deigneth to make his dwelling with a sinful worm, to kindle a heavenly flame in a lamp of clay? In this holy fire, perish every image of impurity, soon as it is formed in the secret chamber of the heart! Let not the Holy Spirit be grieved and provoked by witnessing in me the indulgence of sensual and unlawful desires! Let my delight be in pleasing God, in growing holiness, in more similitude to holy angels and "spirits of just men made perfect," in "*perfecting* holiness in the fear of God," in sensible conformity to the image of the Son of God, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

Forgive, holy Lord God, all the sins of my childhood and youth, or riper age, against the laws of chastity: blot them out as a cloud, yea, as a thick cloud, these my transgressions: let them not be mentioned to me any more: cast them as a stone into the depths of the sea, and when sought for, let them not be found: grant me, O Lord, the blessedness of that man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Behold, I was shapen in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me. May the blood of Jesus Christ, thy Son, cleanse me from this and from all sin. May I henceforth "make a covenant with my eyes," that I regard not things forbidden—with my ear,

my lips, my heart, watching daily, hourly, even to the end of this probation; and, then, happy day, I shall be admitted to the company of the pure and blest, with whom never can I be liable even to *think* amiss; where no temptation is, no material for sin, no unlikeness to the Holy One.

FRIDAY.

HYPOCRISY.

Beware of the scribes, who love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence, make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.—Mark xii. 38—40.

Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.—Luke xii. 1.

Then, in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers; the same shall receive greater damnation.—Luke xx. 45—47.

OF all hateful things, hypocrisy in religion is the most odious. It is a direct insult to God, while it imposes a deception on man. The omniscience of

God is defied, and the ignorance of man is honoured. Homage is rendered to the creature, and reverence is denied to the Creator. How offensive must such conduct be in the sight of him who "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men!" The long and ample robe covers not from his view the heart beneath, filled with avarice and pride: and he who "knew what is in man," kindly warns his disciples against the imposition to which they are exposed. We are to suspect hypocrisy in those who affect great state and pomp in religion, who exact homage, and who are ostentatious in their devotions. Covetousness and ambition rankle in their hearts, and we must treat them as spiritual foes. Awful is their fate! Greater damnation awaits these hypocrites—a fate thus paraphrased in the nervous language of the immortal Milton: "They shall be thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the despotic control, the trample and spurn of all the other damned, that in the anguish of their torture shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over them as their slaves and negroes, they shall remain in that plight for ever, the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most under foot and down-trodden vassals of perdition."

From all sins, O Lord, deliver me: but most of all from the detestable and greater damnation-deserving sin of hypocrisy!

Yet it is possible to suspect oneself of religious hypocrisy without reason. How many pure and

upright minds, excessively jealous over themselves "with a godly jealousy," conscious of a multitude of imperfections, distressed with evil thoughts, shocked at the "deceitfulness of sin" within them, panting after holiness, "striving against sin," disappointed, mortified, and discouraged at their slow progress in the heavenly journey, and "writing bitter things against themselves," "in the gall of this bitterness," and "giving place" to the temptations of Satan, at length conclude that they must be hypocrites! O mourner in Zion, what hypocrite ever lamented in secret over the plague of his own heart? What hypocrite ever told the world that he feared and suspected he was a hypocrite? What "wolf in sheep's clothing" ever howled out his true character? Which of this "generation of vipers," would not rather choose the concealment of the verdant turf? Take then, O child of "godly sorrow," "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Know that all thy self-indictments have been charged against themselves by the most eminent of the saints—all except the suspicion of hypocrisy; for all are, in truth, consistent with sincerity. And even the holy apostle could exclaim: "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this dead body?"

But if there be indeed in my heart the least portion of this "leaven of the Pharisees," may I with horror cast it out, knowing that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" and may I keep the Lord's feast, with the "unleavened bread of sin-

cerity and truth." May the evidences of my genuine character be stronger in heaven than upon earth! May I ever keep this motto before my eyes: "thou God seest me!" And if I am unknown, and misunderstood, and misjudged on earth, may I be well known and approved in heaven. When every character shall, at the tribunal of Christ, be unveiled, may I then appear in the true likeness of my Lord and Saviour, a "child of the light and of the day," and bearing the "image of the heavenly one."

SATURDAY.

ALMSGIVING.

Give to him that asketh thee.—Matt. v. 42.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.—Matt. vi. 1—4.

He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.
—Luke iii. 11.

Give alms of such things as ye have.—Luke xi. 41.

Sell that ye have and give alms : provide yourselves bags which wax not old—a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth : for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—Luke xii. 33, 34.

I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.—Luke xvi. 9.*

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.—1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.—1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

To do good, and to communicate, forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—Heb. xiii. 16.

* After frequent and anxious meditations on this very difficult passage, I can arrive at no other conclusion respecting its meaning than this : “ Make you friends of this world’s wealth, by just and charitable uses of it ; prudently as the unfaithful steward did, providing for a time of need ; that when this world’s good shall fail, either by adversity, or by your own decease, when all enjoyment of it must terminate, you may have “ treasure in heaven,” “ a good store in time to come ;” let your “ good works be manifest beforehand,” and “ come up in remembrance before God ;” so shall you have a joyful reception, into the eternal habitations of the blessed, who will be waiting to receive you, with congratulations, as the faithful servants of God, the true followers of his Son.”

This is indeed a lengthened paraphrase of the text, but those who know the difficulty of the passage, will perhaps not think the meaning exhausted,—especially if the whole scope of the chapter be considered, and the striking parable

IN these commands I am taught to be *ready* to give alms; for "God loveth a cheerful giver." Let me, therefore, not give grudgingly. I am taught also to avoid all *ostentation* of bounty. I will endeavour to do good in secret, "as unto the Lord, and not unto men only." Hoarding is forbidden. Enable me, O Lord, to avoid the spirit of the miser, and to lay up my treasure in heaven, that I may, indeed, "die rich." And, for religious purposes, that the poor saints may be relieved and the gospel be spread abroad, I resolve to lay by a certain proportion of my gains, according to the commandment. Deliver me from selfishness, O Lord! Enable me to render unto thee a good account of my stewardship! "Of thine own do we give thee." Thou hast an undoubted right, not to the tenth or the half only, but to the *whole* that I possess. May I never forget the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I have seen

of the rich man and Lazarus with which it closes, and which by a negative view, illustrates the case of the unfaithful and improvident steward.

The Syriac version, which seems to have read with the Alexandrine and Cambridge MSS., *εκλιπη* instead of *εκλιπητε*, appears to me preferable; as it refers the *failure* to the *wealth*, and not to the *persons*: so that the text may thus be rendered, "Make to yourselves friends of worldly wealth, that, when it fails, you may be received into the eternal habitations." The phrase "Mammon of unrighteousness," is merely an idiom, as it appears by the 11th verse, where it is contrasted with "the true mammon," or heavenly riches.

upon the gate of a noble hospital in London, *Dare quàm accipere*: but never that motto elsewhere. The blessedness of *giving*:—how little felt, how little believed! The blessedness of *receiving*—how well understood, how universally desired! But receiving is the blessedness of dependent man: giving, the blessedness of the almighty and most merciful God: surely, then, it must be “*more* blessed to give than to receive.” Oh, may this truth be graven deep in my heart! Then will alms-giving be my delight, my business, my element. I shall then, as a god, “go about doing good:” not in the spirit of a Pharisee, to be seen by men, or to purchase the pardon of my sins, or to acquire a stock of merit by supererogation. Monstrous absurdity! supererogation! What is it? a nonentity, a dream, a popish fiction; alas! a delusion which has deceived and is still deceiving its thousands! For, what merit can I obtain on my own account to avail with God for the pardon of one sin? How much less can I obtain merit to avail on the behalf of other men? Could this be done, of what use would the sacrifice and intercession of Christ be? What need for his incarnation and first advent? No: “though I give all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity”—true Christian love, “I am nothing.” With all my proud and boastful pretensions and superior virtue, without this divine grace “I am nothing.” Notwithstanding the high applause of men, naming me philanthropist, benefactor, father of the poor, quoting my deeds of munificence to prisons, hospitals, asylums, schools, infirmaries,

dispensaries; erecting for me a marble statue of highest art, as the ornament of my country, without *love* I am nothing,"—still nothing in the sight of HIM who "seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at *the heart*." At the last day, when "the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest," the secret and inmost motives which have actuated me in alms-giving, shall be revealed. "Then, oh then, shall I hear the words, which I have often read, addressed to me by the living voice of the "great Judge of quick and dead," "forasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" or shall I hear the reverse: "Whatever you have done, ostentatious and self-righteous hypocrite, you have done for your own glory, and not from love to me or mine? Examine, O my soul, examine thoroughly: prove thy works by the test given, and let not "a deceived heart turn thee aside!"

SUNDAY.

CHRISTIAN ZEAL.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—Gal. iv. 18.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write

unto you and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.—Jude 3, 4.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.—Rev. iii. 19.

ZEAL in general is defined to be “passionate ardour for any person or cause.” *Christian zeal* is distinguished by the *objects* which it promotes, and the *means*, which it adopts for their accomplishment. To some Christians of warm temperament it is necessary that the features of true and warrantable zeal should be distinctly pointed out, in order to warn them of the excesses to which they may run, while they may imagine that they are serving God: and to other Christians of languid affections and cold temperament, it is requisite to apply stimulants to action in the known service of their Lord. The one may become superstitious, mistaken, bigotted, and persecuting: the other lukewarm and indifferent.

But even when brought just to that hallowed and steady zeal, which is required in all, we must sorrowfully acknowledge that it is but too possible to degenerate into carnal security, inordinate affection, spiritual sloth, and negligence.

Hence, says the apostle, with much reason, “it is good,” it is honourable and praise-worthy, “to

be always zealously affected in a good thing:" *always*, not with a transient, meteoric flame. How sad an epitaph on Christian character, "Ye did run well!" How strong an expression of disgust does Jesus employ toward the congregation at Laodicea: "I wish thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." What Christian can endure this indignity, this dreadful reprobation? And yet how many are provoking it! Am I among that number? Are those merciful words addressed to me, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent." Have I "left my first love?" Have I abandoned my "first works?" Are "the last works more than the first," or less? By this test let me faithfully try my spiritual state. Jesus says to each of the Asiatic congregations, "I know thy works:" and might he not say to me as to those in Sardis, "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God?"

Rouse up, then, my soul, gird up thy loins, and begin anew the glorious race! Set before thee always "the prize of thy high calling in Christ Jesus." So run that thou mayest obtain!

The wise and good Apostle, however, would not "run uncertainly, nor contend as one that beateth the air." We must know the *objects* and *means* which are to engage our zeal.

The Galatian Christians are told that every thing honourable, virtuous and good, is to be pursued with zealous affection. The apostle Jude

is more express in his exhortation to “ contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints,” adding this reason; “ for there are certain men crept in unawares, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ.” Here the Christian soldier is called to arms: the trumpet is blown: the foe is even in the camp: the battle commences with these “ ungodly men.” They would corrupt and pervert the faith: they profess to be Christians; but they are enemies in disguise. They entered amongst us with loud and high pretensions to a knowledge and experience of Christian truth: they extolled in extraordinary terms, “ the grace of God;” but with what design? only that they might insinuate and infer the abrogation of all moral duty; and have, at length, not only denied the holy law of God as the Christian rule of life, but have proceeded to that extreme of impiety, as to maintain that the more they sin against the law—the more unholy and lascivious they are, the more is the grace of God displayed and honoured in their salvation! Oh! doctrine of devils! Gospel of the infernals! Exposition of the father of lies! Worthy disciples of such a master! Enemies of “ our only master and Lord Jesus Christ!” Against ye all will we “ earnestly contend:” we will *strive together* for the faith of the gospel.” With all our might and in all lawful ways, will we strive. If we are cold and heartless in this cause “ may our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth, and our right hand forget her skill!” Expect us night and day at our post, never slum-

bering or sleeping, arrayed in "the whole armour of God," and wielding in God's great name "the sword of the Spirit." *Avant, or yield!* Ye have no business in our Christian territory. Go to "*Epicurus' styce*:" turn *his* doctrine as you please; but "the grace of God," ye shall not, with our leave, "turn into lasciviousness."

If any condemn this language as too fervent, let them hear a strain from the incomparable Milton. "Our Saviour, who had all gifts in him, was Lord to express his indoctrinating power in what sort him best seemed; sometimes by a mild and familiar converse; sometimes with plain and impartial home-speaking, regardless of those whom the auditors might think he should have had in more respect; otherwhile, with better and ireful rebukes, if not teaching, yet leaving excuseless those his wilful impugnors. What was all in him, was divided among many others, the teachers of his church; some to be severe and ever of a sad gravity, that they may win such, and check sometimes those who be of nature over-confident and jocund; others were sent more cheerful and free, and still as it were at large, in the midst of an untrespassing honesty; that they who are so tempered, may have by whom they might be drawn to salvation; and they who are too scrupulous, and dejected of spirit, might be often strengthened with wise consolations and revivings: no man being forced wholly to dissolve that ground-work of nature which God created in him; the sanguine to empty out all his sociable liveliness, the cholic to expel quite the unsinching predomi-

nance of his anger; but that each radical humour and passion, wrought upon and corrected as it ought, might be made the proper mould and foundation of every man's peculiar gifts and virtues. Some, also, were indued with a staid moderation and soundness of argument, to teach and convince the rational and sober-minded; yet not therefore that to be thought the only expedient course of teaching; for, in times of opposition, when, either against new heresies arising, or old corruptions to be reformed, this cool unpassionate mildness of positive wisdom is not enough to damp and astonish the proud resistance of carnal and false doctors;—then, (that I have may have leave to soar awhile as the poets use,) ZEAL, whose substance is ethereal, arming in complete diamond, ascends his fiery chariot, drawn with two blazing meteors, figured like beasts, but of a higher breed than any the zodiac yields, resembling two of those four which Ezekiel and St. John saw, the one visaged like a lion, to express power, high authority and indignation; the other of countenance like a man, to cast derision and scorn upon perverse and fraudulent seducers: with these the invincible warrior, ZEAL, shaking loosely the slack reins, drives over the heads of scarlet prelates, and such as are insolent to maintain traditions, bruising their stiff necks under his flaming wheels. Thus did the true prophets of old combat with the false: thus Christ himself, the fountain of meekness, found acrimony enough to be still galling and vexing the prelatical Pharisees. But ye will say, these had immediate warrant from

God to be thus bitter ; and I say, so much the plainer is it proved, that there may be a sanctified bitterness against the enemies of truth.*

While this diamond-clad invincible warrior, however, is driving over the enemies of truth and righteousness, he has, slung over his shoulder, a silver trumpet, with which he is ready to blow a "joyful sound," proclaiming "liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound ;" announcing "peace on earth, good will to men:" declaring the all-acceptable tidings, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," and that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

In all these objects and endeavours the zealous Christian, as a true philanthropist, keeps in view the *general happiness* of mankind. He is not a sour misanthrope, a gloomy and unnatural theorist, a conspirator against the liberty and happiness of his kind : no, he sincerely and affectionately loves the human race : he is happy when he can alleviate any of the sufferings of humanity ; happy when he can supply the antidote to the various evils which sin inflicts on transgressors. He is a "brother born for adversity:" he "weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with them that rejoice:" "who is weak and he is not weak ; who is offended and he burns not?" A zealous Christian is a common blessing : he is the salt of

* Apology for Smectymnuus.

the land ; he is a light in a dark benighted world ; he is a Joseph to famishing thousands : whithersoever he goes he carries God with him, in whose “ presence there is fulness of joy.”

The business of the zealous Christian is to teach the ignorant, to warn the careless, to admonish the profane, to relieve the needy, to “ visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction,” to plead the cause of the oppressed. In all this he is no fanciful theorist, and barren speculator ; but while the wise in their own conceit are debating and adjusting their principles, and making a show of great preparation, to sweep away with a stroke the common calamities of man, he is busily employed, though with little or no ostentation, in *doing* that work, which they only *talk of* or *project*. By a divine tact and instinct, not by a scholastic rule, he touches the hidden springs of our nature, and obtains from Heaven the secret of *doing good*.

MONDAY.

FORTITUDE.

When ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled ; for such things must needs be ; but the end is not yet : for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles : these are the beginnings of sorrows.—Mark xiii. 7, 8.

But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified : for these things must first come to pass, but the

end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.—Luke xxi. 9—11.

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind : for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin ; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.—1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

Stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men : be strong.—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

How much does true religion elevate the human character ! The ignorant it enlightens ; the impure it cleanses : the irascible it calms ; and the timorous it inspires with fortitude ; a fortitude superior to that of Mutius, Regulus, or Cato. Many of the most brave and heroic minds have been subdued by calamity ; and where is the man unsupported by true religion, who can sustain the sudden shocks of public distress and private affliction, without symptoms of agitation and alarm ?

But the duty of the Christian in such circumstances is clearly pointed out. “ When we hear of wars, and rumours of wars : ” of “ nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ; ” of “ commotions ; ” of “ great earthquakes in divers places ; ” of “ famines and pestilences ; ” and even should there be “ fearful sights,” and “ great signs from heaven,” we are not to be troubled and terrified.

Yet surely these calamities are terrible, and enough to make "men's hearts fail them for fear:" enough to produce "distress of nations with perplexity." And these effects shall be produced in "the men of the world, who have their portion in this life." Alas! what a portion! How evanescent, how destructible! War desolates their fertile country, and bereaves them of their sons; the earthquake shakes all the grandeur and beauty of their architecture into ruin; famine sweeps away all their luxurious dainties; and pestilence suddenly seizes them in full health, and hurries them away to more fearful pains in "their own place." Whether they see these miseries, or suffer them, they must be terrified, dejected, and wretched.

Not so the faithful and obedient servant of Christ. He is forewarned of these things; he expects them: he perceives something of their utility to the great cause of religion; how the walls of Zion are built "in troublous times," and how "the eternal purpose" of God is fulfilled by these visitations. And, while he mourns over the crimes of men which call for this retribution, he discerns in these "signs of the times" the tokens of his Lord's triumph over all his enemies, and the approach of a glorious period of truth, righteousness, and peace throughout the world.

Instead, therefore, of alarm at these terrific signs, he is calm and serene. Amidst all the fearful sights and great signs from heaven, which the enemies of Christ behold, he "sees a sight they can-

not see ;” his own Redeemer and Lord, who “ rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.”

Some of these awful and portentous signs are now evidently passing before our eyes. What then are *our* thoughts ; how do *we* feel ; what is *our* duty ? Our Lord charges us not to be *troubled*, not to be *terrified*. Are our minds then prepared for these events ; can we bear the tossing of the ship on the troubled waves without fear, knowing that though Christ appears to sleep, his “ heart waketh ” for our protection and safety ? Can we say ; “ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble : therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Wherefore should we Christians be terrified at the fulfilment of our Lord’s predictions, which should rather act as a corroboration of our faith and confidence in him ? Can we not trust his own cause in his own hands ? Can we be more concerned for the ark than he is, who has not only foretold all these signs of the times, but has “ given himself for us,” a sacrifice for our sins, to save us from “ the wrath to come ?” Let us but sincerely believe in him, and whatsoever woes shall befall the ungodly it shall be well with us. With *holy fortitude*, then, let us behold “ the terrible doings of the Lord among the children of men.” “ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the

indignation be overpast: for “behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”

But Christian fortitude may be called, not only to repel fear of public calamities falling upon a profane and evil world: it may also be required for the support of the soul under suffering. Pussillanimity and cowardice must not be allowed in the heart of the Christian soldier. “As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.” “Stand fast; quit you like men; be strong.”

No example, surely, can be more animating than that which is set before us in the person of our Lord. What constancy, what extraordinary fortitude did he display under sufferings, reproach, scorn, malignity of men and devils! How did he “endure the cross, despise the shame, and bear the contradiction of sinners against himself.” How much the magnanimous apostle had caught the genuine spirit of his divine Master, when he said to the elders of the congregation at Ephesus; “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions wait for me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” And also to the brethren of Cæsarea, dissuading him from going to face his enemies at Jerusalem: “What mean

ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." This was no vain boast; for being "strong in the grace which was in Christ Jesus," he went forth and with undaunted spirit met the foe: his motto being, "I am sufficient for all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Are we exposed, or likely to be exposed, to persecution for Christ's sake, "let us arm ourselves also with the same mind." Let us not yield to natural timidity, nor allow ourselves to be infected with the fears of others, nor permit men with "sleight, and cunning craftiness," to practise upon our credulity. "In a time of persecution in the last century," says Dr. Watts, "some pious ministers met together, expressing their mutual fears, and consulting how to provide for their own safety: when one stood up in the spirit of faith, and said, *we are all immortal till our work is done*; whereby he declared his lively sense of the restraining power of God over the malice of men, and his assurance that God would preserve them in life, so long as he had any service to employ them in. This was in truth, a sublime thought. A Roman orator, or a Greek poet, would have been admired and celebrated for it by all the critics. This was the language of faith, and it had a sublime and glorious effect; it dispersed their fears at once, and they went away rejoicing."

Are we suffering from bodily pain and infirmity, poverty, losses, embarrassments, disappointments,

calumny, bereavements, treachery, or any other of the numerous troubles of this mortal life ; now is the time for the exercise of this noble Christian grace, which dignifies the poorest and the lowest of the human race, and places him beside the greatest models of human virtue, lauded by philosophy and fame :—nay, more, for some of their greatest names are stained with the infamy of self-murder, with the disgrace of *cowardice*, in their conflict with calamity. Cato, with all his virtue, was not proof against the fear of Cæsar's revenge ; and to avoid it fled by *suicide*, a deed strangely applauded by moralists, Christian as well as heathen. The apostrophe of Valerius Maximus to the memory of the Roman may be in part excused, when he says : “ Utica, O Cato, is the witness of thy illustrious exit, in which, from thy brave wounds, streamed forth, less of blood than of glory : since, in falling most resolutely on thy sword, thou hast given a noble lesson to men, how much dignity without life ought to be preferred by the good, to life without dignity.” But, how Dodwell and Addison can fall into the same strain is surprising and deplorable, when even Aristotle, and Andronicus his commentator, could speak with the most decided reprobation of such conduct. Aristotle says of the self-murderer, that he is “ injurious to the commonwealth by depriving it of a member without its consent ;” and his commentator adds, that “ the laws punish such a one as far as they can by denying his body the privilege of sepulture.” “ We are listed under providence,” says Collier from Plato, “ and must

wait till the discharge comes. To desert our colours will be of more than mortal consequence. He that goes into the other world before he is sent for, is like to meet with no very good welcome."

How long shall Heathen philosophers put to shame Christian moralists? "We have not so learned Christ" as to think of attempting to relieve ourselves under suffering, by an act so base, so wicked, so repugnant to all right feeling and just sentiments, and so expressly opposed to the dispensations of Divine providence. The *thought* may visit us; the *temptation* may haunt and oppress the mind; but not for one moment must it be entertained. "Get thee behind me, Satan," must be our cry, while we at the same time "look to the strong one for strength;" who for our consolation under trial has said; "as thy days, thy strength shall be." "Be strong," then, O Christian, "Yea, be strong;" for thy God will not "suffer thee to be tempted above that which thou art able to bear; but will with the temptation make a way to escape that thou mayest be able to bear it." Plead this gracious promise at "the throne of grace." Say, "in the Lord have I righteousness and *strength*." "When my flesh and my heart fail, the Lord is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." I can bear all trouble, all suffering, all human ills with this divine support. I will not "make flesh mine arm." No longer will I "lean to my own understanding, nor trust my own heart;" but I will commit myself to the everlasting arms "of my heavenly Father." He shall "bear me as on eagles' wings:"

he will carry me through every stage of this wilderness, even unto hoary hairs : he will “guide me by his counsel,” till I shall reach the borders of the land of rest ; and then,

The holy triumphs of my soul
Shall death itself outbrave,
Leave dull mortality behind,
And fly beyond the grave.

TUESDAY.

SPIRITUAL JOY.

Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

—Luke x. 20.

Rejoicing in hope.—Rom. xii. 12.

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.—

Philip. iii. 1 ; iv. 4.

Rejoice evermore.—1 Thess. v. 16.

In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Thess. v. 18.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

—James i. 2—4.

Is any merry, let him sing psalms.—James v. 13.

This is indeed a heavenly grace, a celestial duty, a pleasant command. It is evidently the will of God, that our religion should be no cause

of sorrow to us, that it "never was designed to make our pleasures less:" for who can pronounce that man miserable who "rejoices always," who "rejoices evermore," who in "every thing gives thanks," who "rejoices in tribulation," who "counts it all joy, when he falls into trials," various and distressing, who can sing praises to God at midnight in the deepest recesses of a prison, and loaded with chains and infamy?

Whence then this perennial fountain of joy?
"Man is born to trouble."

"In this shape or in that has God entailed
The mother's throes, on all of woman born,
Not more the children than sure heirs of pain."

Whence therefore does this antidote come? This cannot be the joy of the world, which is so marred by envy, disappointment, satiety, sickness, and fear of death. By what extraordinary secret is the heart of the Christian, a spring of unceasing joy? The answer is before us in the words of our Lord; "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The assurance of hope in the mercy of God and the merits of Christ is the parent of spiritual joy.

This to me, then, becomes the most interesting question, what reason have I to believe that *my* name is written in heaven? Can this be ascertained? Am I warranted to indulge in this holy and divine joy? Is it fanatical and wild to entertain this assurance? But, were not the apostles justified in cherishing this joy, on the

undoubted assurance of the fact, that *their* names were written in heaven? And may not a Christian, in the present age, do the same? Surely he may. The privileges of the saints were not intended to be confined to the first age of our religion. We need this joy and this assurance of hope, as much as those who have lived before.

Since, however, the voice of Jesus, soft and melodious as the harps of heaven, is no more heard on earth, by what evidence may I reach the knowledge of my part in the book of life? "Whereby may I know that I shall inherit" the promise? Do I know, feel, and bewail my condition as a sinner, condemned by the law of God and my own conscience to everlasting perdition? Have I fled to the hope and refuge of the cross of Christ, trusting in him, and him only as "made of God unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?" Do I "abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good?" Are the laws of Jesus my great rule of life, and do I aim at following his all-perfect example of virtue and holiness? Do I "love the brethren?" Are my "affections set on things which are above, not on things on the earth;" and is my conversation daily in heaven by prayer, meditation, and spiritual exercises? Then surely I am a believer in Jesus, and though still very, very imperfect yet a sincere and genuine follower of him as my Lord and Master. If so, who shall rob me of the high hope and joyful assurance, that as one of his sheep, all named and numbered by himself the good Shepherd, *my* unworthy name

also is found written in the "Lamb's book of life?"

Thus do I build my house, not on the shifting sands of phantasies, impressions, presumptions; but on the solid and eternal rock of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"—"the faith of God's elect"—"the faith that worketh by love"—that which is "careful to maintain good works," to "observe Christ's sayings and do them." Let the rain descend, the floods come, the winds blow and beat upon this house, it shall not fall, for it is founded on a rock.

I will then adopt the saintly strain of the Virgin, and say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." And with David: "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me." "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

O glorious and happy company of the redeemed, crowned with unfading, everlasting joy, singing "the high praises of God," as ye enter his palace-gate, clad in robes of dazzling brightness, with palms of triumph in your hands, and harps of gold; "your joy is full!" The Captain of your salvation hath made you more happy than earthly conquerors. Their names have perished, or they

have been stained with infamy and crime; and the most mighty heroes of this world's greatness, may now be the most unhappy of the human race: their brow may be crowned with thorns, and they may be tormented, day and night, with the hideous yells of those who once sung their praise and extolled them to the skies. But you have "obtained joy and gladness" most enviable, most to be desired. You have reached the fountain of life, of pure and perpetual pleasure. God himself has wiped away from your eyes every tear; and I see the sad and sable forms of sorrow and sighing, once haunting and annoying you here in this vale of tears, now fleeing away from you for ever, to their own proper abode of darkness and despair. And shall I, happy saints of the Most High, ever join ye; and will ye ever welcome me in among you as the blessed of the Lord, to swell with my feeble and unworthy voice the high anthem of eternal praise, and everlasting joy?

"The thought of such amazing bliss
Should constant joy create."

Rejoice, my soul, in the Lord, again I say, Rejoice! "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." Adieu, all earthly sorrows, all earthly joys! "Farewell father and mother, friends and relations; farewell world and all delights; farewell sun, moon, and stars; welcome God and Father; welcome sweet Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant; wel-

come, blessed Spirit of grace and God of all consolation; welcome glory, welcome eternal life, welcome death !”*

W E D N E S D A Y.

BIGOTRY.

And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us.—Luke ix. 49, 50.

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law, how readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell

* The conclusion of the eloquent, pious, and affecting address of the Rev. Hugh M’Kail, delivered by him on the scaffold at his execution, December, 1666, at the Market Cross of Edinburgh. His crime was, resistance against the establishment of Prelacy in Scotland. The detail, as related in Crookshank’s ‘History of the State and Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Revolution,’ affords many interesting and instructive lessons. See Vol. i. p. 237.

among thieves, which atripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And, by chance, there came a certain priest that way ; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side : and likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journed, came where he was ; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him ; and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And, on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two-pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves ? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise.—Luke x. 25—37.

Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness.*
—Luke xi. 35.

And he said unto them, ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation ; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.
—Acts x. 28.

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree : *boast not against the branches* : but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well : because of unbelief they were broken of, and thou standest by faith. *Be not high minded, but fear.* For if God spared not the natural branches, take

* i. e. See that you use aright your understanding, and mistake not error for truth. Do not fancy that you know the truth while you are in error.

heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them that fell, severity ; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in : for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree ; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?—Rom. xi. 17—24.

Under the reputable names of *zeal* and *patriotism*, is too often concealed the disreputable offence of bigotry. While it is justifiable and right to cherish zeal for our own sentiments, as being adopted on account of their presumed truth and importance, we are liable to contract so great a fondness for them *because they are our own*, as to make us blind to the opinions and arguments which may be opposed to them by others. And, while it is a sacred duty, as well as a natural affection, to love our country, and those of our own nation in particular, in what part of the world soever we may happen to meet with them, it is an offence against the law of nature, and the law of Christ, the great philanthropist, to indulge in national antipathies, and to raise barriers against the free and friendly intercourse of nations. These idols of the *tribe* and of the *den* are as offensive to pure Christianity as to true philosophy ; and their horrid reign, it is to be hoped, will speedily give way before the benign sway of the sceptre of the

Prince of peace. This bigotry, both national and sectarian, hath too long held a powerful empire over the human mind. It is high time that the yoke were broken, and that the oppressed mind were released from its galling chain. The ancient Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, their neighbours, because they had built a temple on Mount Gerizim, in Samaria, and had given out that in Samaria, and not at Jerusalem, men ought to worship God. The Samaritans persisting in the original schism of Jeroboam were undoubtedly in the wrong; and it would have been the duty of the Jews to testify with proper zeal against the error; but zeal had degenerated into bigotry, such bigotry that a Samaritan might perish with hunger, or bleed to death at their doors, before they would stretch forth a hand to help. The common feelings of humanity were suppressed by the rancour of national antipathy. The Samaritan would succour the wretched Jew, but the Jew would, in similar circumstances, suffer the Samaritan to perish. Our Lord, however, teaches us that we are not to stifle the voice of humanity within us, when we behold a neighbour, either of our own or of another nation, in distress. The good Samaritan, with all his errors, was a more lovely character than the proud and selfish priest. The Samaritan might be theologically wrong, but he was practically right: the Jew might be theologically right, but he was practically wrong. The certainty of being right, the fact of being right in regard to religious doctrine, far from lifting us up with pride and haughti-

ness, and hardening our hearts against the common offices of humanity toward those who may be in error, should operate just in the contrary way. Infidels have been known to resist and reject all arguments, until believers have visited and relieved them in a time of sickness and want. This argument has won them over to the faith of Christ, and they have died "in the Lord." Alas, that so much national prejudice and bigotry should set the human family at variance with each other! When "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth," strange that the Christian, so called, should oppress and persecute the Jew; the Jew curse the Christian; and the Mahometan despise, and execrate, and destroy both. But "let us who are of the light and of the day," show another spirit. Let us take heed that the light which is in us be not darkness. Let us "call no man common or unclean." Let us for ever renounce the spirit of national bigotry: as in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. We are "debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise."

What then can I do for you, my brethren of other nations, and those in far distant lands? How can I show you that I deem every one of you a man and a brother? Fain would I behold, O ye sons of Shem, a breach in your great 'Tartarian wall, and all your city-gates thrown open wide, to receive the messengers of salvation and

the book of life! would to God that I could so engage your friendship, ye wandering tribes of Ishmael, as to converse with me of "the things that belong to your peace," and everlasting rest! Nor would I refuse to traverse your burning sands, swarthy progeny of Ham, to invite you to "take of the water of life freely." I mourn over those of you who are the descendants of Christians, now the deceived and abused and bigotted followers of "the false prophet." For you, sons and daughters of Abraham, "a people scattered and peeled," I continually pray, and my bowels of compassion yearn over you with especial tenderness, as you are branches of "the root of Jesse," into whose stock, I, by the mercy and unmerited favour of God, have been engrafted. Your prejudice, bigotry, and hardened unbelief, do I continually bewail, and nothing would make me more happy than to see you "grafted in again into your own olive-tree."

Against none of you, men and brethren, distant or near my home; of colour diverse from each other, or from me; of customs, habits, manners, various and strange; of language polished or barbarous; of religion erroneous, absurd or impure; against none do I cherish any hatred: no national antipathy toward you finds a place in my breast: whether I visit you, or whether you come to me, I shall extend to you the hand of common humanity; and, far from seeking to harm you, to deceive, to corrupt and overreach you, to compass your enslavement or your ruin, I will "do good

to you all, as I have opportunity." If you are in want, I will relieve you; if in sickness, I will visit you; if in trouble, I will comfort you; if in danger, I will warn and protect you; and, if ye will hear me, I will instruct you in "the word of the truth of the gospel," and as a wandering lost brother will lead you back into "the path of life." May God incline the hearts of all nations toward each other, and overrule their intercourse for universal happiness and his own glory!

Does any one think that Christ will approve his sectarian bigotry, forbidding others to exercise their modes of worship and promulgate their sentiments? Let him hear what the meek and mild prophet of the Most High, saith, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us." There may be differences of sentiment, of belief, of practice; but, if they touch not the fundamentals of truth, they may be forborne with, for the sake of the greater good done by the propagation of that which is common to all professing the Christian name. How great a mistake did even the lovely disciple, John, fall into, when he put an interdict on some because they followed not with him! And how many have imbibed the same error, regardless of the reproof of Christ! It is to our reproach as Christians, that we are broken into so many sects. Why do we limit ourselves to the present number? How possible were it to multiply them a hundred-fold! But, if this be not desirable, why cannot we as well diminish the number as increase it? Have we opened a door which we cannot shut? How small the diffe-

rences which divide some Christians from others! And how fierce and bitter have been the controversies between the nearly approximating sects—more than between those more distant! While we endeavour to maintain *all truth*, let us do it in the spirit of candour; allowing to an opponent the possibility of being in the right, examining his arguments with fairness, treating them with courtesy and kindness, and doing to him in this respect, as we wish him to do to us. Let *truth* be the only object and not victory, and our differences will soon be settled; we shall soon come nearly, if not quite, to “the same mind and the same judgment.”

Away, then, with all racks, and dungeons, and flames, for the suppression of religious opinions, and the stoppage of its free publication! Away with prosecutions, and fines, and tests, and oaths against the conscience! Away with the *holy* inquisition, papal thunder, and gothic excommunication! “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of,” who would “call down fire from heaven” to consume those who differ from you. “Refrain from those men and let them alone; for if their counsel, or their work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” May we learn to distinguish between bigotry and indifference to truth; between genuine candour and that soft pliancy which yields always to the last impression; between an overbearing assertion of truth, and a traitorous abandonment of it, under the abused name of charity.

Teach me, O Lord, in this virtue as in all others, to keep “the golden mean,”—“the narrow way which leadeth unto life.” Pardon the *national* or *sectarian* bigotry of which I may have been guilty. Endue me with “thy free spirit.” May I never “hide myself from my own flesh,” nor deem any form of human nature as foreign to me. Never may I assume haughty airs, or say, “Stand by, I am holier,” or wiser than thou. With an unbending regard to truth, may I unite suavity of temper; “in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” And thus, by manifesting the spirit of him who would not “break the bruised reed,” may I show that I am one of his disciples!

THURSDAY.

PROVIDENCE.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. *Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*—Matt. x. 29—31.

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.—Luke xii. 6, 7.

Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.—Philip. iv. 6, 7.

Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you.—1 Peter v. 7.

No. I.

From the beginning there have not been wanting those who have, both in theory and practice, denied the doctrine of Providence. Some with a bolder front have denied its existence at all: others, not so abandoned, have allowed its general control over human affairs, but have denied the doctrine of special interposition, superintendence and care. But as, to deny the doctrine of Providence altogether, is to profess *atheism* in theory; so, to deny the doctrine of particular and special Providence, is to carry the profane theory into practice. And profane it is, since all religion is founded on a belief of the truth, that God not only exists and is omnipresent, but that he “beholds the children of men,” their works, their ways, yea, their very thoughts, in order that he may “give to every man as his work shall be;” that he may praise or blame; justify or condemn; punish or reward.

To this profane, and licentious, and unhappy school—the Epicurean—no Christian can possibly belong. His whole life and being as a Christian is framed on the perfect conviction of a Providence, general, particular, and special.

This doctrine was believed by the saints from the beginning, and was the principal source of their consolation : and this doctrine is most clearly and beautifully depicted by our Lord in the passages before us : nay, it is not a dry, speculative doctrine which he establishes and settles by authority ; but one which is immediately connected with practical duty. We are “not to fear ;” because the providence of God extends to the minutest objects in creation, and to the smallest possible events—even to the alighting of a sparrow upon the ground, or the fall of a hair from the head. No language could more forcibly express the all-consoling truth, that “the offspring of God” are his particular care, even to their most minute concerns. “God exerciseth a special Providence,” saith the wise and pious Charnock, “over the actions of a good man, as well as over his person. *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.*” ’Tis a special because a delightful providence ; *he delights in his way.* How highly may it cheer a man to be in covenant with that God, which rules the world, and hath all things at his beck ; to be under not only the care of his wisdom, but of his goodness. The Governor of the world being such an only friend, will do him no hurt ; being such an only father, will order all things to his good out of a fatherly affection. He is the world’s sovereign, but a good man’s father ; he rules the heavens and the earth, but he loves his holy ones. Other things are the objects of his Providence, and a good man is the end of it ; for *the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole*

earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

For these good reasons, then, timorous Christian, *fear not*. Neither chance nor fate rules the world, but *thy* Father and *thy* Friend. *All things are yours; the world is yours; because you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* Art thou in want? *Fear not.* What saith the Prophet Habakkuk? *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail; and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* This season of want is the very time for the performance of the duty. The extremity of your want, O fearful one, and the providential supply of that want, travel side by side: the supply may arrive before the extremity, but the extremity shall not arrive before the supply; unless thy unreasonable and unbelieving fears hasten it prematurely. But remember, Christian brother the duty enjoined—*fear not*. Check all such distrust of the divine care, wisdom, foresight, and mercy. Take up the Prophet's song, in the season of want. It will be a pleasant occupation of the time appointed by Providence for waiting. It will quite obliterate the sense of want; and you will feel that, in this view, *there is no want to them that fear him.*

Can the providence, or foresight, care and faithfulness of God be doubted, any more than his omnipotence, when we have such a record before us of that daily supply, which came direct

from heaven to the tents of Israel, during forty years? Alas! indeed it can be doubted, distrusted, insulted, even by the very recipients themselves. Behold, strewed all along the meandering course of the people of God through the Arabian desert, the dry and whitened bones of murmurers, complainers, doubters, unbelievers, who *went back in their hearts unto Egypt*; who said, *Our souls do loath this light bread. And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness: and they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust: yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed. Can he give bread also; can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger came up also against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation; though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food. He sent them meat to the full. He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven; and by his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea. And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat and were well filled; for he gave them their own*

desire: they were not estranged from their lust. But, while their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. Strange competition of wonders! The wondrous hardness of their hearts, striving against the wondrous goodness and patience of God! If we will fear, *let us fear lest we fall after the same example of unbelief. These things are written for our instruction.*

Let the goodness and just severity of God, then instruct me by the inward aid of his good spirit, that I may learn to obey the precept of my Lord and Saviour; and in every season of want, confide, with no admixture of fear and distrust whatever in the All-Bountiful One!

FRIDAY.



No. II.

PROVIDENCE—continued.

THE divine command, through the inspired apostle, is, *Be careful for nothing.* i. e. *Be not anxious: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* How great a relief to a mind naturally timid, anxious, and distrustful!

How intertwined are the circumstances and the devotions of the Christian with the providence of God! What a tender interest does our Heavenly Father take in all our wants, perplexities, temptations, sorrows! Believing in his providence as upholding and overruling all things; confiding in his love and pity, we are to bring, as little children to a parent, all our necessities and troubles; and, with filial, reverential freedom, *make known to HIM all our requests.* Nothing is to be kept back. *All our desire is to be spread before him.* How gracious, how good is our Sovereign Lord, the King of the whole earth? And is my Father a king then? Is the vicegerent of the Almighty my brother, and my friend? Have I interest in the Court of the Creator? Have I access to the royal presence—to *the throne of grace*? Is it not only my privilege to enjoy this communication with the Majesty of Heaven on special occasions; is it also my *duty*, on every occasion of life, to come before the presence with thanksgiving for past favours, and with requests for more? *This is not after the manner of man, O Lord!* In the court of Ahasuerus, *who reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, whosoever, whether man or woman, should come unto the king into the inner court, who was not called, there was one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king should hold out the golden sceptre, that he might live:* and even the queen, Esther, could not approach the royal presence with a special request, without much solicitude and uncertainty. Happily for her, for her uncle Mordecai, and for the

Jewish people in Shushan and the provinces, the golden sceptre *was* held out to her: she obtained favour in the sight of a capricious despot; and all apprehension was put to flight with the gracious inquiry: *What wilt thou queen Esther; and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.* It is not convenient to detail in this place, the wonderful story of providence connected with this favourable reception of the heroic and pious queen. But the history beautifully illustrates this great axiom in Providence, that the *heart of man is in the hand of the Lord: as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.* Who does not tremble for Mordecai, when he sees the gallows fifty cubits high, prepared for him in the court of Haman's house, lest the queen's delay should prove fatal to her noble-minded relative? And who is not surprised and delighted to find that *on that night*, when the gallows was making, the king could not sleep; and, to amuse the tedious hours, ordered *the book of records of the chronicles to be read to him*; wherein the good services of Mordecai, which had gone unrewarded, not accidentally attracted his attention; and a sense of justice and gratitude caused the desire of remuneration? Moreover, how extraordinary a conjunction that Haman, at that unseasonable hour, should be at hand to prefer his wicked request against the man, whom the king was determining to honour as a royal prince! How wonderful the ways of God to man! Well may we yield implicit obedience to the precept. *Be not anxious. Let your requests be made*

known to God. There is no law in this court to prohibit your access, at all times. No hour is unseasonable. You are never an unwelcome intruder on royal privacy. You need never stand like Esther at a distance, between hope and fear; it is your duty to come, on every occasion, to touch that golden sceptre which never threatens, but ever invites. *God shall supply all your need, according to his glorious riches by Christ Jesus.* He encourages you to *believe in God and fear not,* nor *be anxious,* by the assurance that *if you ask any thing in his name, he will do it; that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Be cheered then, sorrowful, perplexed, anxious, desponding soul. *Commit thy way unto HIM who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*

But, notwithstanding all the comfortable things which may be said to establish our trust in divine providence, there will be lingering in some minds, a doubt of its *personal* application and benefit to them. *They* are so sinful, so unworthy, that, how true soever the doctrine in general, *they* are exceptions. All things seem against them: their plans are not successful: their efforts appear fruitless: prosperity smiles on others; adversity frowns on them. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Is not this language, however, as unsuitable

to a Christian as to a believer under the former dispensation? The Psalmist renounces it as a foul libel on Providence. Shall we indulge in so peevish and melancholy a strain, and impute to the God of all grace and goodness, partiality, caprice, forgetfulness, connivance at the world's iniquity, and harsh severity toward his own people? Let us humble ourselves before God for such thoughts, so unworthy of his Providence and of his covenant. It may be, indeed, admitted that we are unworthy, vile, yea *the chief of sinners*; but does that character exclude us from the divine mercy and put us out of the pale of God's providence? Let the Apostle answer, who although attributing to himself this very character, yet entertained far different views of the ways of God, and says, *for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*. What man ever experienced more buffetings from Satan's messengers, more thorns in the flesh, more opposition and affliction than Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles? Yet we never hear from him any morbid suspicions and desponding tones respecting the divine providence. All that we have to do under adversity, is to consider our ways; to examine ourselves; to prove the integrity of our hearts; and then *to wait on the Lord and keep his way*. Far from dictating the course of his providence, let us only be concerned to know what is his will; and, with respect to ourselves and all

belonging to us, say from the heart, *thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Not my will, but thine be done.*

After all, however, mourning soul, there is still an arrow in thy side. Thou hast not yet *the peace that passeth all understanding*: far, far from it. What then prevents? Will this strain from the pious Herbert suit thee?

Poor heart, lament,
For since thy God refuses still,
There is some rub, some discontent,
Which cools his will:
Thy Father could
Quickly effect what thou dost move,
For he is power: and sure he would,
For he is love.

Is there any *accursed thing* hidden in thy tent, any *wedge of gold*, any *Babylonish garment*? Adversity sometimes attends the saints for the prevention of greater evils: *the outward man decayeth* in order that *the inward man may be renewed day by day*. But, in other cases, adversity is sent as a friendly monitor to point out to us our error. The cause of spiritual malady may lie hidden deep in the vitals of our best purposes and thoughts. Even in Job there was a latent cause for grief known only to God. To men Job was sincere, upright, and without offence; so that the Lord could say to Satan, *the accuser of the brethren, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and departeth from evil?* Yet Job, for all this, must

he stripped of every earthly good. His misjudging friends seeing the calamities of life rained down with violence upon his head, and the honourable and wealthy Job, in one day reduced to a dunghill, concluded that he was guilty of some secret and conscious sin, and that he was, after all, a hypocrite and deceiver, whom God was pointing out to the notice and detestation of the world : so erroneous are the judgments of man on the ways of God ! And yet there *was* a cause ; for the Most High and Holy One would not have *afflicted willingly*, and thus have *grieved* his servant, merely to falsify the malicious insinuations of the wicked one. What then was the cause ? It does appear that Job had trusted secretly in his own righteousness, and had not sufficiently felt the evil of sin, the spirituality of the law of God, and the need of lowly, self-abasing, and penitent thoughts ; for, when instructed by his affliction, he had learned the lesson intended by Providence, he expresses himself thus : *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* This was enough. The trial was then concluded. Brighter days than ever awaited Job. The world was convinced of its mistake. Satan was baffled and confounded ; and *the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.* And *after this* season of adversity, *Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.*

What is it, then, Christian, which keeps thee

anxious, fearful, and desponding; and bars out *the peace of God* from thy *heart and mind*? Be sure that thou lay the blame on the right cause. The cause being removed, the effect ceases. Let it be ignorance, let it be constitutional timidity and irresolution, let it be latent or known sin; whatever be the cause, rest not until it be ascertained. Intreat the Lord that he would make it known, since, often *the deceitfulness of sin* eludes a sincere and diligent search. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

This is the way to obtain *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*. This shall preserve us from anxious, fearful, desponding thoughts. This shall raise us to a lofty region, pure, serene, and blessed; high above the turbulence, and change, and misery of this world. This is christian peace. *Peace*, says Jesus, *I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you*. Rest, then, on the promise of him who upholds and governs the world.

SATURDAY.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until

seven times; but until seventy times seven.—Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.—Mark xi. 25, 26.

Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.—Luke vi. 37.

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.—Luke xvii. 3, 4.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—Ephes. iv. 31, 32.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.—Ephes. v. 1, 2.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.—Coloss. iii. 12—14.

BEHOLD the extent of man's forgiveness—*until seven times!* The prince of the apostles imagines this measure of forbearance to be stretched beyond the ordinary limit. But how very deficient in comparison of the standard of heaven! And how confounded and self-abased must the apostle have felt, when the christian law was revealed! *Seventy times seven!* Yea, *if thy brother trespass*

against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. Thou wilt exercise thy children, O Lord, in these godlike acts, that they may become more and more *partakers of the divine nature*. And shall I then feel the slightest reluctance to the practice of these commands? Shall I, by cherishing the least spark of malignity, become like to him who was *a murderer from the beginning*? Ah no; rather let me rejoice that I am called to imitate the overflowing kindness of my Heavenly Father, in his forgiveness of *my* trespasses, which cannot be numbered.

As therefore, God, in forgiving us, retains no hostility, no vindictive feeling, no matter of accusation against us, but *forgives us all trespasses, for Christ's sake; blotteth out our transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud our sins; will no more remember them; upbraideth not; casts our sins behind his back; covereth them; sinks them as a stone into the depths of the sea, so that when sought for, they shall not be found;* we ought, also, from the heart to forgive those who may have trespassed against us. This duty, so difficult to some minds, and under aggravated circumstances, is yet made imperative; and the aid of devotion must be called in to overcome the reluctance of nature. Have we received any injury from ~~anybody~~ the next time we approach to God in prayer to ask forgiveness on our own account, we must previously perform the act of pardoning the offender; and then we may ask the divine favour for ourselves. No success will

attend our prayers, unless we have purged our hearts of all malice, hatred, and resentment toward our neighbour.

Let me not then continually approach *the throne of grace* asking forgiveness, and retire, hoping that my prayer is granted, while I have not *from the heart* forgiven my offending brother, my most inveterate foe. We are not to wait for signs of repentance in the offender, before we forgive him, in our hearts. It is true that circumstances may prevent an actual reconciliation; indeed that may be prevented by the perverseness and impenitency of the offender: ~~but the blessed Father has already forgiven him, and nothing is wanting to the completion of our pardon, but the act of sincere repentance on our part towards God and each other in our hearts.~~ Our duty is plain. So far from cherishing that implacable temper which is not to be moved by the confession and contrition of the offender, the reconciliation must be ~~very~~ effected already, on our part, by the utter absence of all resentment, and the act of pardon passed within. Such is the will of God, ~~and such is the way of God to man.~~ Before we return to him, he has already forgiven; and nothing is wanting to the completion of our pardon, but the act of sincere repentance on our part towards God and each other in our hearts. So doing, we shall be, and appear to be, *the children of our Father who is in heaven.*

Take heed to yourselves. Well may the Saviour give us such a charge on such a subject! He knows full well the narrow and contracted measure of human forbearance and generosity. And yet from the frequent occasions when they are required, no virtues need to be more cultivated.

“ The kindest and the happiest pair
Have oft occasion to forbear,
And something every day they live
To pity, and perhaps forgive.”

From our levity, forgetfulness, selfishness, and pride, the more intimate our connection, and the closer the relation we bear to each other, the more liable are we to mutual offence. The primitive Christians were not exempt from this infirmity of our nature, any more than other men; and to them exhortation and command on this subject became necessary from those who had the care of the congregations. The Christians of Ephesus, Colosse, and Corinth, excellent and accomplished as they were in many respects, yet had need of correction as to temper and disposition: their sanctification was not complete at the moment of their justification by faith in Christ. Their fellowship being very intimate and frequent, they were liable to the evils which arise from the familiarity of family relations: no bond so powerful, so pleasant in itself; none so suitable to the weakness and exposure of our nature; and yet, without constant vigilance and care, none more liable to be rent asunder by impatience, envy, jealousy, or some such form of selfishness.

The old, sour, corrupt leaven of an evil and malignant temper, must therefore be purged out from the christian bosom. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and calumny be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath*

forgiven you. Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Thus appealed to, what Christian can remain implacable and resentful? And, it is added, upon all these things put on love, which is the most perfect tie.

~~Undress thyself, then, Christian, of that red and fiery apparel, which suits only the soul that is preparing for the everlasting burnings ~~of hell~~~~
~~of hell, where their fire is not quenched.~~ Put on, as the elect and beloved saints of God the heavenly apparel. These robes of white are alone becoming the soul, which has obtained the peace of God that passeth all understanding; one whose conversation is daily in heaven, among the sons of peace there, who live in lovely fellowship; their harps never untuned or discordant, and their hearts as harmonious as their harps; breathing only that spirit of ~~charity~~ ^{love}, which is the most perfect bond of fellowship. For, why cannot the sons of heaven give, or receive offence? Only because they are made perfect in love: every one knows ^{or ought to know} exactly what is due to his brother, and every ~~soul~~ ^{soul} is disposed most cordially to render it to him: ~~they have~~ ^{they have} attained to the practical knowledge of that great secret of social happiness, to love their neighbour as themselves? ~~it not.~~

O that we, who ~~also~~ ^{also} have this secret in words, in conspicuous and golden characters, inscribed in high places, ~~and ^{as} the law of heaven, for~~

man, O that *we* did but understand the sacred meaning of the law, which we profess so much to honour! How pleasantly would the day glide by! How glad should we be to meet any and every ~~brother~~ without suspicion, without fear, without constraint! ~~But offences could arise because, as none would be intended, so none would be committed. But that could then be too happy; and, perhaps, it must needs be that offences come~~ to wean us from earth, and to carry our fondest affections to heaven, where this law in full glory reigns. Let it be never forgotten, however, who hath said—*wo be unto him by whom the offence cometh. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.*

JL. L A Y.

CONTENTMENT.

But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised: is any called in uncircumcision? let him not become circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide

in the same calling, wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.—1 Cor. vii. 17—24.

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.—Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, said that honoured servant of Christ, who by inspiration leaves these precepts on record for the obedience of others. He had himself learned and practised the duty, which he enjoins on us. *In all things I am instructed*, saith he, *both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need.* * O rare attainment of mortals, contentment with our present condition! The natural, the universal discontent of man, has ever been the theme of moralists in prose or song. Thus Horace, to his steward in the country:

“ A slave at Rome, and discontented there,
A country life was once your silent prayer:
A rustic gown, your first desires return;
For Rome, her public games and baths you burn.”

The malady thus described, he prescribes to another equally afflicted, the best remedy he knew:

“ Seize on the present joy, and thus possess,
Where'er you live, an inward happiness.
If reason only can our cares allay,
Not the bold site, that wide commands the sea ;
If they, who through the venturous ocean range,
Not their own passions, but the climate change ;
Anxious through seas and lands to search for rest,
Is but laborious idleness at best.
In desert Ulubrae the bliss you'll find,
If you preserve a firm and equal mind.”

Whether his friend Bullatius profited by the poet's advice is questionable. This universal uneasiness and restlessness of mind, might long since have been banished from the world, had the power of reason alone been a sufficient remedy. And yet the discontent which is so generally felt and so much reprobated must be deemed unreasonable : for, to suppose it possible, any more than desirable, that we should be perfectly satisfied with every condition and every circumstance of our lives, might be to sanctify vice and crime ; to exclude all improvements in society ; and to dry up all the springs of devotion and piety.

The commandment relates principally to our general condition in the world ; the rank and station which providence has been pleased to assign us ; and the measure of this world's good, which we are permitted to enjoy. The cases specified are those of persons in a state of servitude ; those in low or moderate circumstances ; and those who might be tempted to quit their religious connections on account of non-essential differences. The general precepts are : *Let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Let your conver-*

sation be without covetousness ; and be content with such things as ye have. These commands are a death-stroke to the usual causes of discontent, envy, impatience, ambition, the love of money, of fame, of power, of sensual delight : and, although the precepts are more immediately addressed to Christians in the lower walks of life, yet the argument for the duty of contentment accumulates on those who are possessed of wealth and rank : for if the poor slave must be content with his hard lot, when inevitable, much more should the rich and honourable citizen be content and grateful.

It might seem indeed to the inexperienced, almost an impossibility that one in such a rank of life could be discontented and unhappy : yet the fact is far otherwise. The higher the station, the more exposed to the causes of discontent. The wealthy capitalist is not the more contented for his abundance ; but, having amassed one splendid fortune, is the more eager to make use of it, if possible, in creating another and another. The golden valley lengthens before his admiring view, and his entire business, his sole delight consists in gathering up its stones and heaping up its dust. Worthy occupation of an immortal, professing withal that he has Christian hopes ; of one, who might be employing with unspeakably more pleasure to himself, the abundance which God has poured into his lap, and which he has entrusted to his care for the express purpose of doing good in this sad and sinful world ; of one, who, by a faithful administration, might lay up a treasure of pure enjoyment on earth, in *the blessing of him that*

was ready to perish ; and, in heaven, that treasure most of all to be desired, the approving smile of him, whom *we call Master and Lord*.

But, oh ! how difficult is it to say, or at least to think, what is *enough* ! In this the proverb is unusually correct ; “ enough is a little more.” *Auri sacra fames ! Accursed love of money !* When shall the yellow stain be wiped from Christian brows ? When shall the Christian trader, the Christian merchant say, it is enough ; let the remainder of my days, and the whole of my possessions, be a devoted thing to the Lord. As I have spent so many years in accumulation ; resting not, ever busy from day to day, gathering the honied gain ; till now I have more than sufficient for all reasonable wants of my own, or of others dependent on me ; I will, by the help of God, spend the residue of my days in active mercy ; going about not now to receive, but to give, and to do good : this employ will preserve both soul and body in health ; and, while it blesses others, will save me from the perilous sin of covetousness in old age.

But what rank or station of life is exempt from its peculiar temptations and dangers ? The servant or slave for whom all is provided, is still liable to discontent, and to envy the situation of his master. It is true the apostle opens a door for an honourable ambition to those Christians who are in low and servile stations to avail themselves of any opportunity of advancement in life. The Gospel deprives no man of his natural privileges, rights, or advantages ; but confirms and enlarges them all ;

while it affords an antidote to all murmuring, complaining, and discontent.

The duty of slaves in their peculiar condition is here pointed out: they must be content with their situation, and cheerful in their bondage, as the *freemen of the Lord*. But as slavery is in itself an evil, so the bondman may lawfully desire his liberty, and use all reasonable and proper means for its recovery. What honourable and just mind would wish the Christian law to be otherwise framed? As this law is directed to Christian slaves, at Corinth and elsewhere, it follows that persons in that condition of life should not be debarred from religious instruction. Those masters who, from mercenary motives, endeavour to prevent their slaves from obtaining a knowledge of the Scriptures and *the way of salvation*, incur a fearful responsibility. How will they answer to *their* proprietor and Lord for presuming to enslave the *minds* of those whose bodies they count their property? Surely the Christian master, should be as willing that the slave should enjoy his liberty, as the Christian slave is justifiable in seeking it! As no one can maintain the abstract benefit of slavery, it should be the aim of the Christian master possessing slaves, to promote the sacred cause of emancipation: no one has so much power as himself for this object. In so doing he coincides with the genius and design of the Gospel, which is to liberate men from all bondage of every kind. *God has called us to liberty*: and so literally is this to be taken, that the law of Christ forbids a Christian from putting himself into the condition

of a slave: the words of the apostle are ; *become not men's slaves*. If you are free, do not, on any account, by a voluntary act, give up your natural liberty to another. By this law, a sufficient stigma is affixed to the system of slavery, even that which is domestic and more tolerable; shewing it to be as unsuitable to Christianity as to human happiness; at the same time that, by another law, the actual slave is furnished with those motives to submission and contentment, which must tend to suppress insubordination and revolt. While, on the one hand the peace and order of society are effectually provided for, so far as the Christian slave is concerned; on the other hand, the general happiness of mankind is studied by discountenancing the despotism which is, alas! an indigenous plant in the heart and life of man. If no Christian should consent to become a slave, no Christian should allow himself to be a despot.

If the law of Christ represses all murmuring and discontent in the slave, subject to the caprice and cruel tyranny of a task-master, much more should the Christian servant be content with his calling: much as the youthful and inexperienced may pant for the day when they shall become their own masters; and natural as it is for the servant to envy the liberty and the authority of his employer, yet little does either know what reasons may be urged for content with a dependent station. Far happier are those children and those servants who are comfortably provided for daily, by the care and kindness of those whom they envy, than they will be should they become in

their turn parents and masters. Let them be content with their stations, and very thankful while thus provided for, and bless providence which has placed them under such protection. Let them dismiss all complaining thoughts, nor let such words escape their lips; lest, as a punishment, they should be taught by sad experience what is the responsibility of a master. The weapon they so much desire to wield, they little understand.

But, there is a third condition specified in the text, which equally requires contentment—that of the Christian in fellowship. A Corinthian *e. g.* had been a heathen idolater; and, having heard the glorious Gospel from Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, had been converted to the faith of Christ. He is therefore brought into fellowship with other converts, some like himself, from the Heathen; some from the Jews. For a time their harmony is undisturbed. At length the enemy who sows *darnel* among *the good seed of the kingdom*, sends some into the society, who raise *questions which minister strife rather than godly edifying*. They say, *Except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved*. Christians you may be; but, except you are Jews also, your religion is vain, and will come to nought. At this doctrine the mind of the new convert is startled. He is but a novice in the faith: he would fain be right, and fears to be wrong. The rite is painful, humiliating, and, apparently, needless: it appears like a retrograde movement: and yet the partizans who embrace and urge it, seem to enjoy peculiar satisfaction; assume a high tone as the people of God; and

prosper in number and influence. What is to be done? Would it not be right to yield? Is not this the safer course? No, saith the law of Christ. *Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*

This decision seems to condemn many who are ever restless and changeable in their religious connexions; *ever learning and never able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth* they seek. And, since, in these times, remote from a visible model of apostolic authority, so many standards have been set up, as rallying points for Christians to divide from each other, too often upon things quite indifferent, or at least not essential; and many zealous partizans are intent more upon winning converts from one Christian company to swell the numbers of another, than upon making inroads on the common enemy, and enlisting new forces for the service of the great King; it becomes a Christian well to consider every such overture as would detach him from his own religious connexion in which he was called by God to be a Christian, and to know the grace of God in truth. None should encourage that fretful and impatient disposition, which fixes on small or at least unimportant errors and defects in that Christian communion, wherein they were called, and thus give themselves up to a roving life in the Christian world: to-day, with one party, and desecring imperfections, departing to-morrow to another;

and thus mis-spending life in pursuit of the *beau idéal* of Christian purity and perfection on earth ; when it should be sought in a higher region, and may be found nearer home.

This duty, however, and this law do not preclude the kindred duty of *proving all things, and holding fast that which is good*. Weighty reasons there may be for a Christian, especially a Christian minister, to change his religious connexion, and to make a material alteration in his religious profession. Against such a change, made for those weighty reasons, there is no christian law. Herein conscience will be much concerned ; and the duty of contentment in this case, must adjust itself to altered circumstances, so as to fortify the mind against any habit of fickleness or dissatisfaction, which the act of change might otherwise create.

If, therefore, the questions raised in religious society be of such a nature as the text supposes, we are to dismiss them from our anxiety with this decision—*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing ; but the keeping of the commandments of God*. The one is air, the other is solid rock.

Whether our situation then be high or low, honourable or mean, agreeable or unpleasant, the great concern is to *keep the commandments of God* relating to that station. If Providence do not open to me those gratifying changes, which it does to some, let me not envy or repine. All is right. We are all on probation. He that acts well as a slave, shall hereafter fare better than he who acts

ill as a king; for *there is no respect of persons with God.*

MONDAY.

EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and ~~shall~~ not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; but he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.—Luke xiii. 24—27.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.—John vi. 27.

Quench not the Spirit.—1 Thess. v. 19.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.—Heb. ii. 1.

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.—Heb. iv. 11.

IN these divine commands we are charged to *strive*, to *labour*, and to *give earnest heed*. To labour man was doomed, as the penalty for sin.

Employment all naturally seek, as the health both of body and mind ; but labour all would if possible avoid. Yet to the greater part of mankind it is inevitable. At the fall, the very ground was cursed for man's sake. Thorns and thistles, and little else necessary for the support of life, will it produce, without great and incessant toil. The strength of man is not sufficient, and he is obliged to take to his aid creatures stronger than himself; the horse and the ox are mercifully given him by the Creator for his help, to subdue the rugged soil.

The whole dispensation to man, then, in the present life, is one of labour. Exertion in one form or another, he must make to obtain supplies for his wants, whether natural or artificial. But, blessed be God, there is also a dispensation of rest ; and that not merely the balmy sleep, which is so *sweet to the labouring man, whether he eat little or much*, but that *rest which remaineth for the people of God*. The beloved apostle, in Patmos, heard a voice from heaven, saying, *Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*. To this resting-place and delightful home, should our chief labours tend. If the husbandman toils for the harvest, the soldier for peace, the merchant for wealth and ease, the traveller for his beloved country and home, much more must we as Christians, according to the commandment, *labour to enter into that rest ; strive to enter in at the strait gate ; labour not*

so much *for the meat which perisheth, as for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it.* How does the creature toil and strive for an inferior good—to obtain an earthly rest; yet we, alas! who have *the city of God* before us, the glorious presence of *the Ancient of days*, and *the Lamb in the midst of the throne*, *the innumerable host of angels*, and *the spirits of the righteous departed*, all dwelling together in perfect love, and undisturbed harmony, and eternal peace; we, who have all this felicity set before us, can suffer our eyes to long for earthly good as our portion; can give both hands to eager and earnest efforts for the accumulation of wealth, which vanishes from us ere we are aware, as a phantom, as a dream of the night. All trite, and common-place, will some think or say. Alas, it is! Most true it is, that such conduct is, indeed, common to man, and therefore becomes common-place in Scripture, in sermons, and in writings of good men. And how can such trite and stale topics become unsuitable and out of place, but by a more evident earnestness in religion, more striving for *the treasure in heaven*, and less for that which *perisheth in the using*? Those who are earnest and sincere, and on the wing for heavenly rest, will rejoice to have their speed increased, their efforts strengthened, by the exhibition of their Lord's commands and the rest which their souls desire. All others need to be urged by arguments, persuasion, or reproof, till, by the favour of God, they also come to seek *first the kingdom of God and his righte-*

ousness, and to place as secondary all things most dear and delightful to the flesh. Let such and let all consider well the solemn scene which our divine Lord and Saviour sets before us. Danger and destruction are abroad, and the kind and gracious *Master of the house* of mercy and salvation sets open *a door*, for his wandering and rebellious children; sends messages of earnest beseeching to them, to seek this refuge, to enter in by this door, that they may be saved. Some utterly refuse to listen, and the raging lion, in the streets, against which they had been warned, devours them as his lawful prey. Others, roused by the evident approach of danger and alarmed for safety, seek at length the house, and find the door; but, alas! *the door is shut*. Long was it open, and loud and earnest was the call to *flee from the wrath to come*; but all this mercy was unheeded amidst imaginary happiness and security. But the mouth of hell belches forth dreadful flames, and they are overtaking the careless ones. Now will they seek, now will they strive, now will they read, and pray, and inquire, and cry and knock loud at the door of mercy, crying, *Lord, Lord open to us*. But, oh dreadful! the voice which long sounded *without, in the streets of the city, in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates*, now sounds hollow and angry, from *within* the door: yes, that same kind, soft, pleasant, gracious, lovely voice, which, accompanied by outstretched hands, all day long besought the infatuated to repent and turn to this door of hope, that same well known voice from *within*, replies in heart-rending tones, *I know*

you not, whence ye are. Yet will the desperation of the soul make now another effort; now will *strive* by an appeal to that very invitation, so long neglected and scorned, as an argument for salvation:—*not know us, Lord! we have eaten and drunk in thy presence.* Dost thou not remember how we were guests with thee at the same table? We *know thee* well: we have oft-times heard thee as *thou hast taught in our streets* and told us of this *door*, which now in pressing need we have come to seek. Still unopened, the voice of insulted, neglected mercy rises to the awful tone of righteous indignation, and cuts down the last remaining prop of the self-deluded soul, with an imperative and utter rejection. Ye knew me as a Saviour and neglected me. *When I called, ye refused:* the world and sin you loved; take them as your portion: *I know you not* as my disciples; *depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity!* And now the flame has reached them, and licks them into the sulphurous, burning lake, for ever and ever.

Yet these are Christians so called. Even these by their name and profession, claim affinity with Christ. Wherefore, then, their dreadful fate? They did not *strive*, they did not *labour*, they did not *give earnest heed to the things which they heard.* And is salvation, then, rendered dependent on human exertion; is this consistent with the grace of God? Are the purposes of God thus contingent on human efforts? In a certain sense, it must be answered in the affirmative. If it be admitted that the dispensation of God to man in

the present life is marked by labour and exertion ; and, if this does not interfere at all with the sovereign pleasure of God and his supreme controul and disposal of all events ; if, notwithstanding the whole world is full of labour, yet that the times, seasons, and events are not in man's power, but in the hands of God alone ; and, after all the toil, the science, the art, the policy, the wisdom of the world, still *the Most High ruleth among the children of men, and doth according to his will among the inhabitants of the earth, none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou* ; if all this be undeniably true, then we may, on the same grounds, admit and believe that it is equally a dispensation of labour in the spiritual world, as in the natural, moral, and political ; and that the efforts, exertions, and incessant labour required by the commands of Jesus, for the attainment of the heavenly rest, are entirely consistent with the whole dispensation of God to man in the present world. We must watch and pray, and examine ourselves, and meditate and observe the ordinances, and study the word of God, and endeavour to *do good to all men as we have opportunity*, for the glory of God in our own salvation and that of our fellow-men. All this implies a world of labour, interminable but with this mortal life : and even then, as the pious Baxter observes, our rest will be to *rest not day and night in the delightful and unwearisome duty of crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, to come.*

While pardon, then, and repentance, and holiness, and the heavenly rest are divine gifts be-

stowed graciously and without *respect of persons*; yet, according to the divine ordinance, they are to be sought for most earnestly. *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, saith Solomon, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding: yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; for the Lord giveth wisdom. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea, every good path.* Those therefore, who, from whatever pretence, neglect the means, must expect inevitably to lose the end. If God has thus united the means and the end, *what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* He who doth it, doth it at his own peril; and, oh what peril! at the risk of hearing those doleful words, *depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity.*

How lamentable is it to think that many come short of the kingdom of heaven, and do not reach the heavenly rest, because they become *wearied and faint in their minds*, on account of the vigilance, restraint, diligence, self-denial, and other spiritual labour, which is required in the Christian life! *They draw back to perdition*: they are not in real earnest about their souls: they would *serve two masters*; but, finding this impossible, they renounce their God and Saviour, and attach themselves wholly to the flesh and the world.

These have, perhaps, *with joy received the word*, and have endured *for a time*; but *when persecution or temptation has come, they have fallen away*. These are the insincere and formal worshippers of God, professors of the gospel: their type is to be found in the unhappy sons of Israel, whose *carcasses fell in the wilderness*, because *their hearts went back into Egypt*, and were not fully set on the promised land.

If any are slumbering, and *at ease in Zion*, it is *high time to awake out of sleep*. Let us *awake and put on strength*. Let us *gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end*. If there can be no rest without previous labour, let us not dream of heaven, while we are not in the way to possess it. So necessary as a means to the end, is this earnestness of soul in religion, that the apostle says, *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it: for unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith, in them that heard it*. It is not only very possible to *let the things which we have heard, slip* from our memories and hearts, but it is also possible to *quench the spirit*, to grow cold, remiss, and heartless in every religious duty and exercise; while we give all our energy and affections and talents to *the world and the things of the world*. Let us then adopt the prayer of the Psalmist, and say, *My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I*

shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Amidst all the labours, difficulties, and perils of the Christian life, we have the privilege of this gracious promise: *they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. Wait, then on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

LABOUR IN TIME, REST IN ETERNITY.

TUESDAY.

TEMPERANCE.

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.—Ephes. v. 18.

To so shameful a length had the Ephesians gone in luxury and excess, that it is said they banished Hermodorus, one of their chief citizens, on account of his moderation and temperance; adding these words, “no one among us shall be more virtuous than another; if he be, let him show his virtue in another place, and among other people;”

--a speech reprobated by Cicero, as well as Diogenes Laertius, and Heracleitus, from whom he quotes, as, in effect, condemning all the adult citizens without distinction, and consigning the deserted city to the possession of those children who had not arrived at the period of puberty.

To Ephesian converts thus formerly addicted to excess in their Bacchanalian carousals, is the precept directed; warning them against a return to their old habits of intemperance, into which, perhaps, some had unwarily fallen; for we cannot suppose that any great proportion of the Christian fraternity, *the eyes of their understanding being now enlightened*, were in much danger of falling into this disgusting and odious sin. And yet there is need of this warning and command to all; for even though our previous habits may have been strictly temperate, we are not thereby secured against a sudden temptation, which may be the commencement of a downward and debasing course, ending in infamy and ruin; nor against those slow and insidious arts of the enemy of our peace, whereby we may insensibly be led on to practices and habits of excess, from which, presented at first in their full and hideous form, we should have averted our eyes with abhorrence.

This command, therefore, must the Christian wear as a *frontlet between the eyes*, as a *bracelet on the arm*: on every festive occasion this *phylactery* must be seen on his *wedding-garment* broad and clear. *When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee, and put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to*

appetite: be not desirous of his dainties, for they are deceitful meat. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; or, be not luxurious and immoderate in the use of wine. Such are divine commands. That the comfort and refreshment of wine is not forbidden, is very evident: it is the excess, the abuse, which is prohibited. Those, therefore, who from the abuse would argue against the use of wine, seem to stretch the precept beyond the intention of the lawgiver. In this respect they resemble the Mahometans. In the Koran it is said, "They will ask thee concerning wine and lots: answer, in both there is great sin, and also some things of use-unto men: but their sinfulness is greater than their use." which words some understand to mean that all excess is to be avoided: while the generality of their doctors infer, that the abuse to which these things are liable, renders it sinful to use them at all. Such an interpretation of our Christian precept some Christians have adopted. This, however, is a mode of argument in morals which cannot be sustained in the practice of common life, and must therefore be abandoned by the judicious interpreter of the divine will. God hath called us to liberty in meats and drinks, only we are not to use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh. Many, indeed, go to excess in eating, as well as in drinking, and in this surfeiting of the body commit much sin; but that abuse cannot be corrected by entire abstinence from nourishing and comfortable food. It is the excess which Christians are commanded to avoid; not the use

of any good thing which *God gives us richly to enjoy*. Unless this interpretation be admitted, the virtue and duty of temperance are entirely nullified and expunged from the moral code. Temperance is exchanged for *abstinence*, which is quite a different thing, and must be regulated, not by judgment, but by *conscience* alone: for, in that case, we have merely to consider whether the use of the thing is lawful or not: if not lawful, we may not touch it at all. Now, in Scripture, we find no general prohibition of wine or strong drink; on the contrary, it is sometimes permitted and enjoined for the comfort and health of the body; as in that well known recommendation of the apostle Paul to Timothy: *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*. Timothy, in this case, would have to exercise *his* judgment as to the quantity which he should use for health and comfort; and herein would be called to the virtue and duty of temperance; whereas before, he had been exercising entire abstinence, whether from conscience, or expediency, or taste, we are not informed. He is now put upon a discretionary use of wine; and, as he had probably some scruples on the subject, these are removed by apostolic authority; and it must be left to Timothy to judge for himself when to use wine, and when to forbear. This moderate and prudent use of vinous, spirituous, and fermented liquors, some will, however, by no means allow; partly, because in their opinion, the health of the body is injured even by the smallest quantity of such stimulants;

and, partly, because they think the moderate use of those beverages, becomes a warrant and plea for others in the abuse of them.

So far as this opinion may be founded in fact, it becomes a duty to abstain altogether from the use of that which is deleterious. But, as there is a difference of opinion in regard to their absolutely injurious nature, it seems necessary to leave every individual, capable of judging for himself, to the fact of his own experience in his own case. The exhausted spirits frequently require some stimulus; and it seems impossible, as well as improper, to prescribe exactly for every individual, in every case, whether that stimulus shall be ale, tea, coffee, wine, or spirits. If the less be allowed habitually or frequently, the greater may sometimes be required; and on this point, who can possibly judge so well as the individual who feels the want? If another, not one of the medical faculty, specially summoned, shall step in, and with some authority, prescribe the nature or measure of the refreshment in question, does it not infringe that precept: *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink?* Our natural and our Christian liberty are both compromised by the interference.

It then becomes a question whether this allowed and moderate use of stimulating beverages may be required to be abandoned, on the allegation, that it affords a plea to the intemperate and profligate for their excesses? In order to determine this question, it must be ascertained that the drunkard actually makes the temperate man answerable for his excess? Is it the fact, that

in order to justify his habits of intoxication, the sot points to his virtuous and temperate neighbour, as the guilty author of his crime ; and can he in truth say, that, but for the example of the temperate man, he should never have fallen into his odious and destructive habits ? It is possible, indeed, that if the question were thus put to the drunkard, he might catch at the idea, as some excuse for his sin ; as it is but too natural for us to endeavour to shift the blame of our conduct, if possible, to the shoulder of another. But the fact, in most instances, will be, that a liking for the stimulating liquor itself, the wild delirium produced by intoxication, the miserable want created by the intervals of excitement, the mirth and joviality around the flowing bowl, the oblivion of worldly cares, losses, and troubles, are the usual and real causes of a habit of intoxication. Moreover, it is much to be questioned whether the moderate and lawful use of these stimulants by others, ever does operate against the reclaiming of intemperate persons. Can it be shown, in any instance, that the drunkard seriously requires the temperate man utterly to repudiate all strong liquors, as the condition of his repentance and reformation ?

After all, however, if it can be ascertained that the entire abstinence from wine and other stimulants, is the only or the most effectual method of reclaiming the intemperate, it may be conceded that we ought thus to abstain, on the same grounds as the apostle Paul resolves, in respect to animal food, that he *would not eat it while the world*

standeth, if his example made his brother to offend. But, as in order to reform the Epicure in meats, we should never think of proposing to abstain from animal food, as an argument to induce him not only to become moderate and sober, but also totally abstinent; so it does not seem necessary to reduce ourselves to the use of mere water, in order to reclaim the drunkard, and reduce him also to the same standard. Surely if by the exhibition of temperance, we can bring him also to the exercise of temperance, there seems neither law nor reason for proceeding either with him or ourselves in the way of entire and rigid abstinence. In so doing, we may by another kind of *excess* do harm, both to health and life, and be the means of bringing a snare and a burden on the tender consciences of our brethren. By fixing a standard, prescribing a rule, and requiring a vow, we may *throw a stumbling block in our brother's way*; and if the temperate man should, in any case, be the unconscious author of the drunkard's sin, the law and vow of *abstinence* may, also, in many cases, become the *direct cause* of guilt; for *where there is no law, there is no transgression*. Now if God hath not prescribed a law in this case, it is more than man may be justified in doing; for had positive abstinence been intended; if God had chosen under the Christian dispensation to banish wine and strong drink from Christian tables, there would certainly have been some express precept to this effect put upon record, rather than the implied allowance of wine

on the festive board, by the example of the cup placed on the table of the Lord.

On the whole then, God hath *called us to liberty* in this matter; but we must carefully watch against *using it for an occasion to the flesh*; and *by love serve another*. If by a temperate use of wine, diluted spirits, or other stimulants, I promote my health and comfort, I will use my liberty in taking them as I find occasion: but, if I see that, by entire abstinence from them, I can reclaim a fallen brother, I will then utterly renounce the use of them—so far as my comfort and refreshment are concerned; and, as much as possible, where their use may be important to my health. *A brother or sister is not to be brought into bondage in such cases.*

On the subject of temperance many just sentiments were entertained by the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome. In the third book of his Ethics, Aristotle says, “The temperate man is moderate in regard to appetite; he takes no pleasure in those things, in which the intemperate delight; on the contrary, they are irksome to him. Nor does he wish for what is improper, or vehemently for any sensual pleasures. He does not grieve for their absence, nor desire them, even moderately, when they are improper: but, whatever is conducive to health or comfort, if agreeable in itself, he seeks, with a regard to moderation and propriety; together with other enjoyments, not opposed to these, neither contrary to virtue, nor beyond his means. The intemperate man

carries these pleasures beyond all due bounds. Not so the temperate man: he obeys right reason."

If any Christian then be naturally inclined to intemperance either in eating or drinking, let him not be put to shame by heathen morality; but having *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, let him *make no provision for the flesh to fulfil it in the lust thereof*. *He that soweth to the flesh, shall from the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall from the spirit reap life everlasting*. Instead of *tarrying long at the wine*, and spending much time and substance in luxuriating on this earthly delight, we are to be *filled with the spirit*,—spiritually minded, always disposed for religious exercises and conversation. Our Lord and Saviour cautions us very explicitly against any instance of excess in meats and drinks, as well as the overcharging cares of this life; lest the day of our departure from this life, or his coming to judgment, should overtake us unawares, and find us unprepared. Certainly no one can be in a fit state to appear before God, who is surfeited and drunken, and overcharged with earthly things. Habitual, daily, hourly *temperance* in all things, is, therefore, the proper condition of man; first for his health, virtue, comfort, and honour;—next for his eternal safety.

W E D N E S D A Y.

SCHISM.

I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.—Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.—1 Cor. i. 10.

As it hath pleased the glorious Creator to impress on all his works, some strong marks of the divine unity, in harmony with the most boundless variety; so in the constitution of the Christian religion may we perceive the evidence of a similar divine character. Some, however, either not perceiving these distinct marks, or not comprehending how they are consistent in the same subject, have presumed to sever what God hath joined together: not so much now in nature, or in human society at large; for by the new philosophy, the harmony of unity with diversity, is generally understood and admitted:—but alas! still in religion, even in our Christian religion, which is designed by its glo-

rious author to *gather together in one all the children of God that are scattered abroad*. Some have been strongly impressed with the necessity of unity in doctrine and discipline: others perceiving the impossibility of exact uniformity in either, have renounced the hope of its attainment, and have pleaded for the utmost diversity; making every individual and every society a law unto themselves. Both these opposite causes tend to produce schisms in the body of Christ. Could men be brought calmly and kindly to consider where unity and uniformity may safely end, and where diversity of sentiment and practice may, with the same safety to the soul be allowed; an end must at once be put to those distressing and disgraceful schisms, which have weakened and impeded the Christian cause. Admit only that diversity may be consistent with unity, and a provision is made for the everlasting peace and prosperity of *the holy hill of Sion*.

As to the envy, the ambition, the pride, the selfishness of those who, for private purposes, *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ*, nothing can cure or prevent those causes but a *new heart and a right spirit*. All persons thus guilty of schismatical practices, are to be *marked and avoided* as a pestilence. In shunning all religious communion with them, in avoiding all religious conversation with them, we are obeying the commandment, and are not justly chargeable with bigotry and intolerance. Further than avoidance and non-communion, we need not,—we are not authorised to proceed: this is sufficient to

mark them as schismatics; and their cause and party not being of God, will, in the end, fall to the ground. All real schism contains in itself the elements of its own destruction, and may be safely left to its own results.

While we, then, utterly reprobate and renounce a dividing spirit, it becomes us to study, with deep attention, the great subject of Christian unity, in harmony with diversity. He who understands this subject, will not only *pray for*, but keep, *the peace of Jerusalem*. It is certainly possible for Christian societies to be *perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment*, or it would not have been enjoined on them by divine authority: at the same time it may not be possible that they should *see eye to eye* in things minor and non-essential. On this point, *every one must be fully persuaded in his own mind*. Let every Christian be disposed to unite in communion with his brother entertaining some diversity of sentiment, and he will soon be enabled to decide whether that diversity affects the essentials of Christianity. Schism arises more from the heart, than from the head. The intolerant pride and selfishness, whether of a nation, a society, or an individual, which would establish a rigid uniformity in every particular of Christian doctrine and practice, is equally revolting to common sense, natural liberty, and Christian charity. It is to be avoided as the odious *cause of divisions and offences*.

As there is in true Christianity nothing selfish and anti-social, nothing which should divide good

men from each other, but every thing which should draw them into the closest and most endearing relation, may *the God of peace* be pleased to *bruise Satan*, that grand schismatic, *under our feet, shortly!*

Hast thou, God of love, beheld in my proud and self-willed heart, any thing which disunites me from those who *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, any fond fancy, any private interpretation, any peculiar creed, any blind prejudice, any party attachment, any sectarian adherence to the antiquity or the splendour of a name? Have I joined the cry, *I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas?* Have I thus broken the unity of the saints—the bond of peace? Forgive, O Lord, this my schismatical spirit and conduct; and enable me, henceforth, to embrace every Christian brother with the most charitable affection. In my endeavour to maintain the unity of the *faith, hope, baptism* of the gospel, *guide me in judgment, and teach me thy way!* Enable me to discern and to acknowledge thy true servants, and to promote the glorious and felicitous cause of Christian unity throughout the world; and, in thy mercy, be pleased to grant me admission to that blessed congregation of true believers in Christ, who shall be so perfectly and eternally united in mind and heart, as to sing without ceasing and without a discordant note; *unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen!*

THURSDAY.

CHRISTIAN PURITY.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof.—Rom. xiii. 12—14.

But with many of them God was not well pleased ; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.—1 Cor. x. 5—15.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may

minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.—Ephes. iv. 29, 30.

Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints ; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient : but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them : for for ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord : walk as children of light ; (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth ;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light : for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.—Ephes. v. 3—17.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry : for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience : in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these ; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that

created him : where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free : but Christ is all, and in all.—Coloss. iii. 5—11.

Abstain from all appearance of evil.—1 Thess. v. 22.

How dignified, how angelic, how divine, is the Christian life! Happy are we when the names of Saint and Puritan are justly applied to us, though in scorn, by the men of the world! *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Christian soldier, thou art here called forth to thy proper business. Awake, put on *the armour of light* and march on thy heavenly way gracefully and courageously, with the sword of the spirit unsheathed, and resolutely pointed against the pollutions and the excesses, the strife and the envying of this world. The beams of brightness issuing from thee will chase away the sons of darkness, and thus triumphant shalt thou pursue thy course to *the city of God.*

Alas! who can look on *the carcasses of those who fell in the wilderness* without fear and diffidence? Those professed people of God had seen the wonders of divine power and goodness in Egypt and at the Red Sea, yet they *lusted after evil things and were destroyed.* Have I come out from the world and become *separate* from the unclean and the profane, then let me be warned against the subtle temptations, which would insensibly draw me back into its impure company, its unhallowed conversation. O God, who art

faithful to all thy promises, suffer me not to be *tempted above that which I am able to bear ; but, with the temptation, make a way of escape, that I may be able to bear it.* May I ever *hate vain thoughts*, impure imaginations, those secret fires, which feed the flame of lust, and be enabled to *set a watch over the door of my lips*, that *no corrupt communication may proceed out of my mouth*, to pollute the ear of another, but only *that which is good* to instruct and improve. While many think there is no harm in the indulgence of impure and lascivious language, so long as they proceed not to correspondent acts, may I show my fear and utter abhorrence of such parlance with sin, by frowns, by reproofs, by speedy withdrawal from such *false brethren*.

It is carefully to be remarked, that the Spirit of God, several times in the passage before us, joins covetousness with uncleanness, and both with idolatry, as if to stamp them with the brand of heathenism, and to show his utter detestation of those sins, which cleave to us *as the girdle cleaveth to the loins* ; and which, notwithstanding the stigma here affixed to them, have too generally been esteemed by the christian world as venial sins, and are suffered to pass without any great share of reprobation ; yet are they such as to shut out from the heavenly inheritance those who live in them and die impenitent. Let the person who is licentious in thought, word, or deed, rank himself among the impure heathen, and not hope, without repentance, to enter *the kingdom of Christ and of God*. Let the covetous man, also, renounce all

pretensions to the name of Christian, for holy writ pronounces him an idolater, quite unfit for the worship of the Blessed One. That imagination which delights to rove amidst human forms and earthly possessions is far from God, and is filled with idols, which it *worships and serves instead of the Creator, God over all blessed for ever.*

Let me, then, ponder well every word of these holy commands, and if any of the old leaven of *filthiness and foolish talking, and jesting, or covetousness* be left within me, I beseech thee, O Lord, to enable me to *purge it out.* As the holy disciple of a holy master, may *I daily follow that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.* O remember not against me former iniquities! Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord!

FRIDAY.

ECONOMY.

And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.—John vi. 11, 12.

How widely different from parsimony is true economy! How consistent with liberality and the

comfort of human life ! It seems, indeed, to assume a dignified middle place between extravagance and waste on the one hand, and niggardliness and meanness on the other. When the Lord Jesus furnishes a common meal for a multitude, the food is plain, but relishing and good : there is bread enough, and to spare : the people ate both of the bread and the sauce, *as much as they wished* : the miracle ceased only *when they were filled* : not till then did Jesus say to his disciples, *Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost*. Herein he hath left us an example as well as a rule for the economy of life. A great principle pervading all nature is involved in this precept. In the works and ways of God we discern no waste : there are, indeed, abundance and vast variety, but all remaining fragments are used up in returning to their component and ultimate parts, to furnish a fresh supply in some other form : the solid passes into the fluid, and that again into the æriform, so that ultimately *nothing is lost*. In God's works and management there is nothing superfluous, while there is nothing mean.

From this rule all classes of men may learn a useful and important lesson : we are not to lose *fragments*. The politician must be an economist of the public wealth, and watch against all waste. The merchant and the trader, the artizan, the mechanic, and the husbandman, must all economize, by looking to the fragments of stock, of materials and of time ; and the good housekeeper, by observing the rule, will be *like the merchant's ships—she will bring her food from afar*.

There is much blessing in a prudent and liberal economy: states, societies, trade and commerce, husbandry and households, thus managed, will all flourish and be happy. Inattention to this simple rule of the gospel is too often the ruin of human affairs. While prodigality and waste create a consuming and fathomless abyss of ever-yawning want, and miserable parsimony freezes up all the charities of life, and rears only a mountainous region of icy masses, unfit for human use or habitation, a liberal economy, like that illustrated and enjoined in the gospel, places all things in the temperate zone of ease and comfort and bright prosperity.

In whatever station of life I occupy, I will therefore, by the help of God, study this doctrine of the care of fragments. By carefully gathering up fragments of time, of information, of useful materials; by allowing of no waste in my family or business; and by a proper consideration of the value of all fragments, more especially of food and clothing, I will endeavour, both in the letter and the spirit, to keep the command of Jesus to his disciples, to *gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

This duty to a man of the world, merely prudential, becomes to the Christian a part of his religion. *Our* economy is not merely to avoid want, or the inconveniences of life, but is to be sanctified by a dedication of its fruits to the especial service of God. As the misery of man becomes daily more apparent, the opportunity of doing good increases, and the duty of endeavouring to provide means for

this purpose presses with accumulating weight on the humane and considerate mind. With what alacrity, then, should I study economy, that with its fruits I may be helpful to the great cause of philanthropy and religion. How many of the great modern societies have been raised to their eminence of glory and usefulness by *fragments*. That skilful economist and devoted servant of Christ, the late venerable Matthew Wilks, roused the christian world to a sense of the value of fragmental contributions, by his missionary sermon from those words of the prophet, *the children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of Heaven*. Auxiliary and branch societies, with their numerous female and juvenile associations, speedily multiplied; and to them we appeal for proof of the power and virtue of christian economy. Surely for purposes so sublime and holy as those which are contemplated by Bible, Missionary, Tract, School, and other Benevolent Societies, every *fragment* that can be made available should cheerfully be *gathered up*, and to such a cause *nothing should be lost*. If idolaters zealously employ their children to gather fragments of fuel for the honour of *the queen of Heaven*, walking in her brightness, much more should we Christians encourage our children to economize, and be careful of fragments for the honour of *the Sun of Righteousness*; while we ourselves, by the holocaust of our entire persons and possessions, show them how to present unto God, daily, *a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, through the offering*

of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, and his ever prevailing intercession at the right-hand of the Majesty on high.

SATURDAY.

JUSTICE.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.—John vii. 24.

Whatsoever things are just, think of these things.—Philip. iv. 8.

The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—Titus ii. 11—13.

THE elegant personification of justice in a female form, blindfold, and holding an even and exact balance, exhibits to the eye a striking and correct emblem of that inward mental operation by which we decide with truth and impartiality on the actions and motives of men. Justice is very properly termed a cardinal virtue, as the well-being of society turns so much on its sacred observance by all nations: hence the care which has ever been taken to provide, as much as possible, against any improper bias on the minds of those who are called to judge between man and man. To this end the

ancient and venerable court of Areopagus, at Athens, is said to have always tried causes, after the light of day had departed, that there might be no respect of persons in their judgment. Our own countryman, Judge Hale, would not proceed with a trial until he had paid for a buck sent to him as a present by the plaintiff in a certain cause, even though it was the usual compliment by that person to the judges at the assize.

So high a sense of justice did Cicero entertain, that he insists upon our enduring any and all inconveniences, both of body and mind, rather than wrong our neighbour, even though we should be dying of cold and hunger; subjoining this reason, "My life is of less importance to me than this consolatory thought, that I have wronged no one for my own advantage:" hence he styles Justice, "the mistress and queen of all virtues."

Not less importance does the christian morality attribute to this virtue: hence, in all our judgments *in things pertaining to this life*, we are commanded by our Lord to *judge, not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*; and, in our whole conduct, ever to think of *what things soever are just*, as well as *lovely and of good report*.

If called, therefore, by office and station to judge of the actions and motives of my fellow men, let me ever suspend all final judgment until the evidence on all sides has been fully established; and in all cases seek from *the Father of lights* that wisdom which is *profitable to direct*, and which is *without partiality*; remembering always that my

sentence will certainly be scrutinized at the bar of that great Judge *who seeth not as man seeth*, even *the righteous Lord, who trieth the hearts and reins*, who will allow for infirmities and errors in judgment, while he condemns, strictly, all secret as well as open perversion of right. Let me never forget that *the righteous Lord loveth righteousness*, that *he exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, and delighteth in these things*.

When tempted by passion or covetousness, even to the thought of wrong, may I, shuddering with abhorrence at the presence of so diabolical a form, say, *get thee behind me satan, thou art an offence to me*. Let me daily and hourly, in public and in private, set all actions, my own and others, in the light of eternity, under the beams of the resplendent throne which shall render all hearts transparent, and bring to light the darkest secrets of this unjust and sinful world.

If I have committed injustice and wronged any one, let me resolve, on the spot, like Zaccheus, to restore, if possible, fourfold. Against all hasty and premature judgments, even in ordinary affairs, may I henceforth be guarded; and, while I defer not unreasonably, an opinion or decision, let me observe the injunction, *be swift to hear, slow to speak*.

For the sake of *the Just One*, pardon, O God of mercy, all thoughts and actions of mine which are unjust before thee; and clothe me with the glorious, spotless, righteousness of *thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased*.

SUNDAY.

CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil : but whosoever will smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—Matt. v. 38—41.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.—Rom. xii. 18.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—Philip. iv. 5.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath : for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.—James i. 19—21.

GREAT is the power of gentleness and concession ! *Yielding pacifieth great offences.* But, oh, what a religion is ours ! What a heavenly temper does it require, or rather bestow ! For, what philosopher would have thought of *turning the other cheek* to the smiter ? What a conquest over pride and passion hath he achieved, who literally obeys this Christian precept ! And, doubtless, it was given to be so obeyed. Jesus herein hath *set us an example that we should walk in his steps, who did*

no sin; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously, He literally gave his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them who plucked off the hair. Yet, by his conduct in the hall of the High Priest, we may learn, that unmerited injuries may be noticed with reprehension or expostulation: thus when Jesus had referred the High Priest to the Scribes and Pharisees, or other auditors, for information concerning his doctrine, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the High Priest so?— Under such circumstances, how did our Lord conduct himself? In the Spirit, though as it appears, not exactly in the letter, of his own precept. *Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me.* A severe and just reproof, which was by no means calculated to invite a repetition of the offence; and by such *meekness of wisdom* are we shielded more effectually from insult, than by all the training of the pugilistic art, and the exercises of arms.

This sentiment will be derided by those who profess to be regulated by “the laws of honour,” and who think it impossible to survive, after having experienced an insult, unless they have endeavoured to punish the offender by taking away his life with their own hand. In the world of honour, life is held of small account. Being every hour exposed to insult from others as proud, as arrogant as themselves, all must view each other as jealous

assassins and irritable gladiators, prepared, at every moment, to exhibit a bloody spectacle for the monstrous gratification of the world of honour. How miserable a bondage to the obsolete institutions of dark feudal times ! How totally repugnant to the spirit and ordinances of Christianity ! How unworthy are men of honour, so called, to take the peaceful name of Jesus on their lips ! How is it possible that they can be Christians, who, so far from suffering wrong patiently, will endure not even a questionable word or look, without risking two lives ? Let them take the name of Goths, and leave the name of Christian for those who can, like their Lord and Master, receive a blow without returning it ; and who, free from cowardice or passion, can, if proper, reprove or expostulate, so as to shame the offender and point on him the eye of public indignation.

Grant unto thy servant, O Lord, this spirit of Christian meekness, this command of temper ; that, under those insults to which I may be exposed from the world, and more especially under those which may arise from my strict adherence to thy word, I may ever manifest my subjection to Christ and his laws, and show to the world of honour, falsely so called, that the *true* laws of honour are those which Jesus gave to his disciples : and, if I be reproached for the name of Christ, and my Christian meekness be denominated pusillanimity, enable me to refute the imputation by a courageous example of non-conformity to the whole *world lying in wickedness*. Thus may I endeavour to *live peaceably with all men* : thus may the mode-

ration of my temper and the mildness of my spirit be known to all around me, remembering that *the Lord is at hand* to note down all my words and all my thoughts, to bring them in evidence another day. Oh, enable me to *set a watch over the door of my lips, that I sin not with my tongue*;—that I may be *swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*. And may all professed Christians, renouncing the world's law of retaliation, be subject to the law of meekness as the followers of *the Lamb of God*.

MONDAY.

TRUTH.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.—Ephes. iv. 25.

Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.—Coloss. iii. 9.

EVERY one *born of God* must necessarily bear his image who is a *God of truth*, and to whom *lying lips are an abomination*. The world also professes to detest the liar, while it is itself the very essence of deception. Nothing, indeed, is more detestable than a wilful deliberate lie; no character more diabolical than the liar. Yet some even justify

known falsehoods as necessary for the business of the world, and innocent if not calculated to injure our neighbour. This latitude a Christian cannot allow. Indeed the very terms of the proposition are contradictory; for, if I tell my neighbour a lie for my own advantage, it follows that he must lose what I gain by the deception. If such lies are necessary to the business of life, human society becomes a proper introduction to the infernal regions, where all is under the power of him who is *a liar and the father of it*.

But lying is *not* necessary for the business of life. Christians are bound to *speak every man truth with his neighbour*. In whatever station or calling, this must be observed: the monarch on the throne, the councillor of state, the pleader at the bar, the witness in court, the merchant and the tradesman, all must *speak every man truth with his neighbour*: the duty would not be enjoined if it were impracticable. It may be difficult, and certainly is, in many cases, to draw the line between truth and falsehood; but the difficulty does not set aside the duty of discrimination. Here, however, lies the force of the precept;—this is the knot which is often to be loosed: in order to avoid the sin of lying, am I obliged to disclose all that I know? Is my neighbour entitled to become acquainted with all the secrets of my family, of my business, of my art or trade? On some occasions he may be intitled to know these secrets, where his interest or reputation is materially concerned. If, on those occasions, by language or otherwise, I conceal the truth with a view to deceive, I am

clearly guilty of a lie, and expose myself to the just judgment of my offended God. Such an occasion was that when Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, was required by his master to declare whither he had gone, after the visit of Naaman the Syrian. His answer was a direct and palpable lie ; *thy servant went no whither*. The righteous judgment of God immediately followed the offence, by transferring the disease of Naaman to the person of the liar, who went out of his master's presence *a leper as white as snow*. Such an occasion, also, took place when Sapphira the wife of Ananias was required by the Apostle Peter to declare for how much money they had sold their land. There should then have been no reservation or concealment.—The congregation had a right to know whether the whole or only a part of the price was contributed to the common fund. This concealment, by means of a direct lie, was visited with still greater severity than in the former instance. Ananias and Sapphira having conspired to tell this gratuitous lie, were smitten with death on the spot—a fearful demonstration of the fact, that, *verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth*. Had he, in every such instance, visited the offence in a similar way, it is to be feared the world would, ere now, have become one vast uninhabited wilderness. But, *the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished* ; and then *all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*.

On such occasions as these, there can be no mistake ; but there may be others wherein we are not

obliged to disclose the truth or to satisfy the inquiries which may be addressed to us. Of this, every one must be left to judge, according to the circumstances of the case; and he must regulate his expressions and answers, so as to give as exactly as possible what is due to his neighbour. It is certainly lawful to use equivocal or evasive expressions which are not positive violations of truth, supposing our neighbour is not entitled to know fully what he desires of us. Our blessed Lord himself sometimes used such expressions to his disciples and the Jews. *Destroy this temple*, said he, *and in three days, I will raise it again*. The Jews understood him to mean the fabric which was then in its peerless glory, shining afar with its gilded marble domes like the Alps at break of day. *Forty and six years*, said they, *was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?* Still does Jesus conceal his meaning of the word *temple*, and leaves them under the misapprehension which they treasured up for the day of accusation.

After his resurrection, as two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, he joins them as a stranger, and, overhearing part of their conversation says, *What manner of communications are these which ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?* Cleopas asks, in return, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? Jesus, not undeceiving them, replies, *What things?* Thus he continued the illusion until they arrived at the village: then he made as

if he would have gone further, but they constrained him by their entreaty to become their guest.—Doubtless this concealment of the truth, and the assumption of language and manner necessary to maintain it, were perfectly innocent, and designed to produce a good effect on the disciples, when, at length, the truth came to be known.

With this admission, however, it must be maintained, that, in all doubtful cases, great care is to be taken that we do not give way to levity, exaggeration, and insincerity in our discourse; and that in the occasional use of equivocal or evasive expressions, we do not violate the integrity of our conscience, which must decide whether we do justice to our neighbour or do him wrong in our communications; whether we are *doing to him as we would wish him to do to us*, in like circumstances.

No good man, however, will prefer such expressions, to those which are plain, direct, and unequivocal. He is transparent in his language as well as in his actions, living under this impression: *Thou God seest me*. He may, alas, in a pressing temptation fall into the sin of lying, but he cannot live in it. Peter had no sooner denied his Lord, than *he went out and wept bitterly*. *A righteous man hateth lying*; as saith the Psalmist, *I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love*. *Truth*, fair lovely *Truth*, therefore, shall be my delight. By thy grace, O Lord God of truth, will I ever *speak truth with my neighbour*; remembering that *the lip of truth shall be established for ever, but a lying tongue is but for a*

moment ; that I am daily hastening to that world where all is perfect truth, sincerity, and love. Blot out, I beseech thee, all my sins against truth, from my childhood and youth to this day, with the blood of Jesus Christ thy Son, which cleanseth from all sin ; and henceforth may I be led by the Spirit of truth, hating every false way.

TUESDAY.

STEADFASTNESS AND PERSEVERANCE.

Abide in me, and I in you : As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine : no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you : continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love : even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.—John xv. 4, 5, 9, 10.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? so run, that ye may obtain.—1 Cor. ix. 24.

And let us not be weary in well-doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.—Gal. vi. 9, 10.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him : Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil

you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.—Coloss. ii. 6—9.

Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.—Heb. iv. 1.

God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.—Heb. vi. 10—12.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.—Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—Philip. iii. 13—21.

Therefore my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.—Philip. iv. 1.

Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary

humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind ; and not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not, taste not, handle not ; which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men ? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body ; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.—Coloss. ii. 18—23.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience ; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.—Heb. x. 35—39.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. xii. 1—3.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines : for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace ; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.—Heb. xiii. 8—9.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the

name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.—James v. 10, 11.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and ever. Amen.—2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.

Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.—1 John ii. 24, 25–28, 29.

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.—Jude 20, 21.

As all possible obstructions are thrown in the way of the Christian, so no duty is more evident or important than that of steadfastness and perseverance in the heavenly course. Jesus calls upon us, therefore, to *abide in him*, to *continue in his love*. The Apostle Paul represents Christians as racers, as labourers, as travellers; and, under these emblems, largely sets forth the duty, with the most proper and the most heart-affecting motives to its performance. In the same manner the Apostles James and Peter, and John and Jude, urge on all

Christians to persevere to the end: we fail for want of keeping the end in view.

Croesus, the rich king of Lydia, on the burning pile, pronounced, with poignant recollection, the name of Solon thrice; giving this reason to Cyrus, his conqueror, who inquired the cause, that Solon had told him, in his prosperity, that the close of life is the test of happiness, which words he found true to his sorrow; for he who once thought himself the happiest of men, was, in the end, the most wretched.

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, says our Lord, is fit for the kingdom of God. Efficiently our salvation depends on the pardoning and upholding grace of God;—instrumentally, on our steady perseverance in the doctrine and service of God:—and, while it is a glorious truth, animating to the chosen people of God, that *they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of his hand*, yet, as a means for the accomplishment of this very end, the duty is laid on us to run, and labour, and strive, and press forward to the mark, hoping for the prize and the reward, and fearing lest it should be lost.

Under this impression let us study the commands here given, with the various motives and arguments adduced in corroboration. As nothing great and important can be obtained without steady application and persevering effort, let us *not think we shall obtain any thing of the Lord by wavering and backsliding*. As the prize to the competitor, reward and rest to the labourer, gain

to the merchant, victory to the soldier, so is eternal life to the Christian : and, if all these characters must steadily persevere in a course, often long, painful, and hazardous, in order to gain the end, let us not think much of any effort, any inconvenience, pain, or trouble, so that we may at last obtain the crown of life which *the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to all them that love his appearing* : and, when ready to faint under the accumulated troubles and difficulties of our Christian course, let us *look to Jesus*, standing in the midst of that *cloud of witnesses*, who, having so *run as to have obtained* the heavenly prize, surround him who is the most eminent *author and finisher of faith*, and who, for the joy set before him, endured infinitely more trouble, difficulty, and pain, than any of his followers,—even the agonies of the cross and *the hour and power of darkness*.

Have I made any advance in the divine life? Have I kept *the narrow way* thus far? Have I successfully encountered any foe; overcome any danger, difficulty, or temptation? let me *thank God and take courage*, and this day set up an *Ebenezer* to the glory of him who hath strengthened me in the way : and, far from entertaining the thought of turning back from the good way, let me *gird up the loins of my mind* with new vigour and resolution ; believing that *He who hath delivered and doth deliver*, will also continue to deliver, even to the end ; that, so long as I am persevering I have the evidence of being in the way to the attainment of *the end of my faith*, even

the salvation of the soul: that I must so run as to obtain, so combat as to conquer; that nothing less than the most determined and unyielding perseverance, as a means, can put me in possession of the promised inheritance. Let my motto, therefore be, "No Cross, no Crown."

WEDNESDAY.

HONESTY.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.—Rom. xii. 17.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. — Rom. xiii. 8.

Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.—Ephes. iv. 28.

This is the will of God, that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.—1 Thess. iv. 6.

We beseech you, brethren, that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.—1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.

THE necessary dependence of mankind on each other for the performance of contracts, and the trust in each other's sense of justice which is required in their multifarious dealings, naturally exalt honesty into the most eminent place among

the virtues. With the world in general, honesty *covers the multitude of sins*. He who is punctual to his engagements may have leave to indulge in almost any lust that shall please his taste. It must be allowed, indeed, that honesty affords a pledge for the exercise of other virtues; but for this consequent there is but a slender security. Many are honest not from principle, but from expediency, from fear, from pride and vanity, from mere habit or calculation. Let these barriers be removed and they will transgress as flagrantly as those whom they now despise.

Not so the true Christian: his crown is composed of many stars, of which, indeed, honesty is one brilliant, and large, but it does not stand alone: there are others of even greater magnitude and splendour—the love of his neighbour and the love of God. He that possesses these principles can be no other than an honest man. If I love God I shall love my neighbour as myself; and if so, I shall be unhappy at the thought of not rendering to him his due.

It may be, and doubtless is, necessary, however, that these precepts should stand on the record as primarily intended for those who, having recently emerged from the fraudulence and falsehood, and covetousness of heathenism, were not supposed to know what was the precise line of duty which they should pursue, and without such directions, might have too easily relapsed into their former habits of dishonesty. False brethren, insincere converts, might continue those practices, which, if not re-proved and provided against, might be considered

by many as almost tolerated and allowed. But the well-instructed Christian, the just and holy man, can entertain no wish to defraud and overreach his neighbour. If, through the power of temptation, he should fall from his high dignity of justice and integrity, to commit an act of dishonesty, it is indeed a fearful aberration from the highway of holiness; and he may well tremble at the words of the Apostle, who says that *the Lord is the avenger of all such*: seeing that *the righteous Lord loveth righteousness*.

But, in general, the people of God are preserved from falling into this temptation. It is true, that in the business of life, they are exposed, in common with all men, to the difficulty of conducting it with fidelity, integrity, and honour. This may be, and, in numerous instances, certainly is a sore grief to them, not knowing how far they should comply with the practices of the world, and yet *provide things honest in the sight of all men*: because, after all, the world's standard of honesty is not so high as it would be thought, when it arrogates almost all virtue to this duty alone, and says,

“ An honest man's the noblest work of God.”

Their standard may be conveniently lowered and elevated according to circumstances; but a Christian's must be invariable. A common and allowed fraud, established as “ the practice of the trade,” is not less a fraud and a dishonesty in the view of his conscience. He cannot adopt the Spartan law of allowing dishonesty when concealed, and only

punishing it when detected. He must renounce dishonest gains, by whomsoever sanctioned, and how long soever established.

It may be thought by men of business, that the Apostle is much too strict in his injunction to *owe no man any thing*. This, however, cannot be taken without some limitation. The Apostle does not mean to say, contract no debt whatever. The commerce of the world could not be carried on upon such terms; nor would he himself have been consistent in saying to Philemon, *if Onesimus owe you any thing, put that on my account: I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it*; thereby taking upon him the debt of another person. He must, therefore, be understood to mean that we should not contract debts which we have not the probable means of paying; nor allow them to remain undischarged, if we have it in our power to pay them. The precept, however, may admit of the strictest interpretation, if we are disposed to receive it; for no man of real honesty will feel a greater satisfaction than when he shall be able to say with truth—"I owe no man any thing but love." However small his possessions, however limited his worldly comforts, he is nobly free and truly happy. The just but servile maxim of the world, that "honesty is the best policy," enters not into the motives which urge him to exonerate himself from debt. He fears as much the possibility of injuring his neighbour, as he wishes to be exempt from the anxieties and troubles of a debtor.

The Apostle, moreover, in this comprehensive precept, certainly intends that, supposing we

should, in any case, have wronged another, we are bound to make proper restitution. One can scarcely suppose that a just man could be guilty of a deliberate violation of right. He would rather, under any extremity, *offer the sacrifices of righteousness and put his trust in the Lord.* But it is possible that in early life, or before *conversion from the error of his ways*, he may have been guilty of some such wrong. It is a clear duty which he owes to his neighbour to make restitution, so far as practicable, and to satisfy all just claims; and this spontaneously according to the noble profession of Zaccheus on becoming a Christian;—*if I have wronged any man, I will restore him fourfold.*

Simple restitution, however, may frequently become the duty of the Christian, when he may have taken more than was due, even without the intention to defraud; or restitution with interest, in case of failure in trade and subsequent prosperity. Numerous instances might be mentioned by way of illustration, all honourable to the parties, and gratifying to those who love virtue and goodness for their own sake. One only, and that of modern times, shall be here adduced, as a fair and pleasing pattern of simple restitution where there was no intention to defraud. The Rev. and learned Mr. Parkhurst, author of the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, had a tenant who had fallen into arrear with his rent. As the amount was £500 per annum, it was represented to his landlord, that the farm was over-rented and that this was the cause of the arrear. Upon a new valuation, the rent was reduced to £450 per annum. Mr. Parkhurst, re-

flecting that, if the farm was *then* too dear, it must have been so from the commencement of the term, unasked, and of his own accord, refunded to his tenant £50 per annum from the date of his lease to that time.

THURSDAY.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another.—Rom. xii. 15, 16.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James i. 27.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Be pitiful.—1 Peter iii. 8.

How happy would all men be were they true Christians ! So far from aggravating the unavoidable afflictions of human life, or creating trouble, where otherwise there would be peace, all, according to the lovely duty here set before us, would be studious to alleviate each other's pain, and augment each other's joy. Poverty, bereavement, and pain, there must be at the best estate of man in the present world, because of the first offence ; but how much lighter would these burdens be, were

every brother of mankind ready to share with brother the uneasy load! And this is the true genius and intent of our religion. It comes to soften the rugged, iron heart of man, chilled and rigid with selfishness; to melt us into the most sincere and tender sympathy for each other's sorrows; to teach us salutary lessons for the soul, by taking us to the house of the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, in order that we may see the vanity of the world, and keep ourselves unspotted with its defilements. And who so qualified to be a sympathising friend, as the humble sincere Christian! He is a follower of Jesus, who rejoiced at the marriage feast at Cana, and furnished the guests with wine of heavenly vintage; and who wept at the grave of Lazarus, his friend; who *went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree; who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; and who is not a high priest, who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Oh! he cannot be *one spirit* with the Lord Jesus, who *shuts up his bowels of compassion against the wants or the sorrows of his brother*—especially of his Christian brother: his heart has not been touched with *a live coal from the altar* of the great sacrifice. Whatever lunar light may have glanced on his understanding, he is yet in the native hardness of the rock; and let him not mistake the chill, damp air of night, even illumi-

nated with moon-beam splendour, for the genial, healthful, vital warmth of Christian affection and sympathy, combined with the full beam of heavenly radiance, streaming resplendently from the very source of all goodness, love, and joy, our blessed, and divine, and compassionate Saviour. Every true Christian is a minor sun, having a system of his own in which he moves, and shines, and blesses. He rejoices in bestowing rather than in receiving. Happy himself in the love of God our Saviour, he would make all around him happy. He carries with him balm for every wound, a cordial for every care; and when the rare season of joy comes, he has a harp too, which he takes from the willows, and which he knows skilfully to touch, in the hour of lawful festivity.

What motives have we to be *kind and tender-hearted* to each other;—to be *all of one mind*; to be *pitiful*; to *have compassion one of another*!—What pity, and kindness, and tender sympathy have we received from our heavenly Father, and suffering Saviour, and gracious Comforter! Shall we withhold our tenderest sympathy from our brethren after this? Surely the very stones would begin to melt at such monstrous apathy! Pity, and love, and sympathy, and friendly offices are the most proper element of the disciple of Jesus. Some are naturally more inclined to sympathy than others: they, perhaps, need not be urged; but others are *hard as the nether mill-stone*, yet they must be brought to feel with tenderness for their brethren, and to enter into the situation and cir-

cumstances of their poor and suffering neighbour, or they will fail in a principal branch of Christian duty, and incur the displeasure of the Lord.

FRIDAY.

HOPE.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—Luke xvi. 25—28.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter i. 13.

Rejoicing in hope.—Rom. xii. 12.

HOPE is a lovely, gentle form, beckoning us forward with a smiling aspect and light step; an angel of mercy sent to the sons of sorrow to bid them look up and await a brighter day. How busy does hope make us when we are at peace, and how energetic, when in trouble! What may he not achieve who only does not despond! How much more precious is a ray of hope than *thousands of gold and silver*. Those illusory heaps may va-

nish in a moment: but, if hope remain, we cannot be miserable. Some, in a certain sense, do indeed hope too much—more than is warrantable in their circumstances:—others, too little. To such extremes of presumption and despondency is man ever liable.

Happy is he who possesses *a good hope through grace*; who hopes on reasonable and proper grounds in the mercy of God in Christ. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in his mercy.* Is he *the God of hope*, and has he imparted to men this precious substitute for possession; the exercise of this affection as a duty to him, on trying occasions, must be especially acceptable in his sight. It was so in the case of Abraham, *the friend of God, who against hope, believed in hope*: it is so, when there is *great distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear*, if then, his saints *look up and lift up their heads*: amidst all the difficulties, temptations, and troubles of the Christian life, to *hope to the end*, and even to *rejoice in hope*—all this must be pleasing in the sight of him who has chosen to keep us in a state of suspense, in order to draw forth our longing expectations to *those things which are not seen but eternal*.

Hope rises buoyant on the waves of trouble; buffets courageously the foaming surge, and conquers the proud element by a vigorous tenacity of life, the gift and the delight of God.

In the most strict sense, hope is the opposite of fear; but, as there may be a wise and salutary fear, so there may be a presumptuous and dangerous hope. In casting off the fear which produces

despondency, we must take care to cherish only the hope which ends in salvation. Does our hope enter into that which is within the veil, whither Jesus as our fore-runner hath for us entered : have we anchor-hold of him as our faithful and merciful high priest, ever living to make intercession for us ? Then is our hope sure and steadfast, because warrantable, by the eternal promise of God, that whosoever believeth in him shall never perish but have everlasting life. In short, is Christ and Christ only, *our hope* ? To hope for favour from the mere justice of God, is to challenge the Almighty to single combat, and dare his omniscience and perfect holiness to find in us a single fault : to hope in the mere mercy of God, is to insult his veracity and the just authority of his law. To ground our hope, therefore, on the absolute justice or absolute mercy of God, or on both combined, is not the hope of the Christian. It is only in Jesus that *mercy and truth have met together—righteousness and peace have embraced each other*. In his *obedience unto death* I behold the law, which I have entirely broken, *magnified and made honourable* : in him and in him alone can I see God, *just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus* ; just, in dispensing mercy ; just, in blotting all my transgressions from the book of his remembrance : in him alone do I behold *God reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*. My hope of salvation shall, therefore, be built on this solid and eternal rock, against which *the gates of hell shall not prevail*.

How awful the hope of the hypocrite !—it is a

spider's web; it is as the giving up of the ghost. To go down to the grave, with a lie in the right hand; to be convinced of the fallacy of our hopes by the sulphurous flame of the fiery lake; to have our eyes opened by the arch-deceiver who has blinded them; to have hoped to the end, in a mere delusion, and to spend eternity in the ravings of despair—how dreadful! I tremble at the possibility! I weep over the multitude now rushing headlong into the yawning gulf! Save them, O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by showing unto them the way of life: save them from their false hopes of heaven, who are crying peace, peace, when there is no peace to them, the wicked. I rejoice, O God of my salvation, in my humble hope in Christ; this will I not abandon, but expire with the sweet name of Jesus on my lips—my hope in life and death.

SATURDAY.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?—2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.—2 John 8.

A HEATHEN poet asserts that the maxim, “know thyself,” descended from heaven; as if man, left

to himself, would never have made his moral nature the subject of reflection ; and it must be confessed that, important as the study is, either from the difficulty attending it, or the results which we apprehend, there is no subject on which we are less informed than ourselves. All men think, but, few reflect. Pythagoras required of his disciples that they should question themselves at the close of the day as to their words, actions, and motives. This was that they might be *a law unto themselves* : but we have a fixed and perfect standard for our self-examination, not liable to the errors, infirmities, caprice, or bias of a corrupt nature. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.* By this standard must we examine ourselves, as by this shall we be tried in the last day. Let me then solemnly ask myself this question : Do I really believe in the Lord Jesus : is he my only hope : anticipating the hour of dissolution, can I lay my hand on my heart and say,

“ Jesus, my God, I know his name,
His name is all my trust.”

Appealing to his omniscience, can I repeat the words of the Apostle, *thou knowest that I love thee?* Looking into my life, do I perceive the evidence of my faith and love, in works of mercy and righteousness, in acts of devotion and holy zeal ? Do I possess this mark of transition from *death to life—the love of the brethren—of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?* Have I this security for possessing *treasure in heaven*, that my *heart is there?*

Let these inquiries be satisfactorily answered and all will be well. Some bearing the name of Jesus are *busy-bodies about other men's matters*, to the neglect of their own : they are always abroad, and their own house is in disorder. They are too busy in *pulling the mote out of their brother's eye*, to attend to the more important and previous duty of *casting the beam out of their own eye*. Instead of habitually and severely examining and censuring others, let me judge myself; and from the difficulty of maintaining the sacred and noble principles of the Christian life in myself, let me learn to think charitably, and judge tenderly of others. May I be daily preparing for the time when *the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed*.

SUNDAY.

SANCTIFICATION.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him ; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin ; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but

yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead ; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.—I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.—Rom. vi. 8—14, 19.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.—Rom. xii. 1, 2, 9.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other : so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.—Gal. v. 16—26.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened,

being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Ephes. iv. 17—24.

Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus: for this is the will of God, even your sanctification.—1 Thess. iv. 2, 3.

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.—1 Pet. i. 14—17.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.—1 Peter ii. 11, 12.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that

he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Pet. i. 5—11.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat! Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.—2 Pet. iii. 11—14.

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.—3 John 11.

THE essential attribute of God is holiness, or an eternal separation from all evil. Nothing malignant, nothing false, nothing unrighteous, can exist in, or proceed from him. Hence, he reiterates the charge to Israel, saying: *Be ye holy, for I am holy*: and in heaven there appears to be a particular order of beings created for the sole purpose of crying aloud round the throne of God, as a perpetual memento to the heavenly world: *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. Heaven is, therefore, a place into which *nothing entereth that defileth, or that worketh abomination*; and, as believers in Jesus are to be ad-

mitted into that blessed and holy place, they must be *sanctified and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*. Naturally, alas, we are *children of disobedience and wrath*, and bear the image of *the wicked one*: language cannot describe our desperate depravity: God alone can properly understand it; and he only can apply the effectual remedy. This is nothing less than a complete renovation of our moral nature—a *predestination to conformity to the image of the Son of God*. *He hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy*. Sin must not only be forgiven, but cleansed. We must not only be acquitted of the guilt, but we must be delivered from the power and being of sin. From the pierced side of the crucified Saviour, issued a stream of blood and water, to typify this united blessing and benefit flowing to all believers, *justification and sanctification*. Closely, inseparably united, however, as they are, we must not confound them with each other, and, like some, treat them as identical blessings. Justification is one single act on the part of God, our heavenly Father, when we believe in his Son, as *made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*: then, by faith in Jesus, are we *forgiven all trespasses*, and there is *no condemnation* resting on us: we are *accepted in the beloved*. This single and solemn act of God is complete for the purpose, and is not renewed, altered, or repealed. *He alters not the thing which hath gone out of his*

lips. In that act of justification, there is the germ and vital principle of sanctification. *Faith worketh by love, purifying the heart.* New moral principles being thus infused, a new character is produced. *We are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.* By virtue of these new principles, under the secret and gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit, believers in Christ daily *grow in grace*, and conformity to his likeness. This is now their great aim, their chief solicitude, their principal business—to *follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Hence the numerous exhortations and commands addressed to Christians, on the subject of sanctification. This work becomes our daily duty. We are answerable to God for the performance of it. Remissness and neglect bring upon us guilt and sorrow; and entire abandonment of this course will prove us to be hypocritical apostates, whose *religion is vain*; being only in *form*, name, and profession, without the vital, practical *power.* Let us ponder well, therefore, this branch of duty, having every inducement to apply ourselves diligently to its performance. Were we required to *make bricks without straw*, to perform duties without principles equal to the result expected; without gracious promises and influences more than sufficient for all our need; then, indeed, we might lie down in despondency, and say, *we are sold under sin: if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?* But while every aid is proffered,

while *God worketh in us and with us to will and to do of his good pleasure*; we have every motive to proceed in the duties of sanctification. If we fail, the blame lies at our own door, and we must await that *account*, which *every man shall render of himself unto God*.

Sanctification, therefore, is not any thing relative and imputed, but personal, internal, energetic, and progressive. We are *God's planting*—his *husbandry*—his *building*—all images faithfully portraying the great truth of progressive holiness.

If then we should be conscious of many defects, omissions, and trespasses in our daily course, we are not hastily to adjudge ourselves to the number of the unbelieving and unregenerate: we may be justified by faith perfectly, since that is one act which does not admit of degrees; and yet be sanctified only in part: indeed the holy Apostle Paul was quite sensible of this truth, who, though certainly justified and accepted in Christ, says, *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*.

Let me then so *number my days as to apply my heart to this wisdom*. It is my duty to see that *sin does not reign in my mortal body, that I should obey it in the lusts thereof*: that I should *present my body to God a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable*: that I should

not be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of my mind: that I should abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good: that I should walk in the spirit and not fulfil the lust of the flesh: that I should put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, and be renewed in the spirit of my mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: that I should be holy in all manner of conversation: that I should abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul: that I should give diligence to add to my faith, courage; to courage, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

To this holy work I would daily proceed, not in my own strength, which is mere feebleness; but in the strength of the Lord, who hath called me to the honour of being one of his *saints*. This sacred and divine title, though taunted with it by *men of the world who have their portion in this life*, I will endeavour to keep untarnished, and wear it as a *chain of gold about my neck*.

Holy Father, *sanctify me through thy truth*: give to me daily grace by thy Holy Spirit, through the ever-prevailing intercession of Jesus, that I may faithfully and earnestly perform this duty of *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*: and, when in thy sight, after all the trials and duties of this transient and imperfect state shall be completed, I am prepared for *thy holy habitation*,

may I joyfully drop this flesh into the tomb to be purified for its resurrection in *the likeness of Christ's glorious body*; and then, with a holy spiritual body, and a soul incapable of an unholy thought or feeling, may I be *presented before thee*, through the blood of Jesus, and by his hand, *faultless, with exceeding joy*.

MONDAY.

LAW SUITS.

If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.—Matt. vi. 40.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?—1 Cor. vi. 1—7.

THE duty of abstaining from an appeal to secular courts, in case of differences between Christian brethren, being here so plainly set forth, little is

left but to wonder that it should be so generally disregarded; and to deplore the covetous or vindictive spirit which blinds the eyes of men professing themselves the disciples of Christ, while they urge their suits in worldly courts, and overlook the prescribed and safer way of proceeding by arbitration. Let those who will not *rather take wrong*, and even *suffer themselves to be defrauded*, rather than prosecute their brother at the law, answer for their violent and worldly spirit to him who has said, *If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

Lord Jesus, I would come unto thee to learn thy *meekness and lowliness of heart*, that I may *find rest unto my soul*. If my brother offend, I will endeavour to convince him of his error in private, and, if necessary, *tell the Congregation* of the offence, that he may hear their voice: but if to this he should turn a deaf ear, may I never be disposed to pursue him with the sword of justice, and drag him into earthly courts: rather may I carry my suit to the court of the Highest, to the just Judge; and, if I be wronged, leave my righteous cause with him who is *no respecter of persons*, and *who will give to every man as his work shall be*. Far from wronging or defrauding any one, may it be my daily study to *do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God*.

TUESDAY.

PERSECUTION FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE.

When they shall lead you and deliver you up, (viz. to councils, rulers, &c.) take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.—Mark xiii. 11.—Luke xii. 11, 12.

Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.—Luke vi. 22, 23.

I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.—Luke xii. 4, 5.

But before all these they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.—Luke xxi. 12—19.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in

this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.—Acts v. 27, 29. Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not.—Rom. xii. 14.

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach : for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.—Heb. xiii. 10—14.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you : on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed ; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God : and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.—1 Peter iv. 12—19.

PERSECUTION for conscience' sake is a mark of Heathenism, of Mahometism, of Judaism, of Popery, of Infidelity ; but it is no mark of Christianity.

The religion of Jesus neither requires the sword for its defence, nor can employ it for its propagation. Our Lord and his Apostles, with the first Christians, *suffered* persecution, but they never practised it. The Christian Religion was established in the world, not in any instance by means of secular power, but by the providence of God, amidst the most sanguinary persecutions from the governments of this world : insomuch that, according to Lactantius,* “ there was not, in the time of Decius, (A.D. 251.) a corner of the earth so remote that the religion of God had not penetrated there ; nor any nation so savage, that it was not softened to the practice of just deeds, by the reception of the worship of God.” This astonishing result was produced, not by human policy, worldly interest, moral philosophy, or magisterial power ; but by a peculiar and extraordinary combination of Christian zeal, patience, and love. Preaching the gospel, epistolary correspondence, friendly conversation and discussion, liberal voluntary contributions of time, substance, and service, were abundantly employed, as means for spreading this holy religion through the world ; and, with the blessing of heaven attendant, they were found sufficient. The gospel was *preached to every creature*.

The powers of this world, however, adopting another course, took up our religion thus extensively spread, and ere long, commenced a series of persecutions under various forms and in various

* De mortibus Persecut. § iii.

degrees of severity, under pretence of supporting, extending, and establishing Christianity to the end of time. The woman, however, *fled from them into the wilderness* and dwelt alone for a season, until her sons were grown to years of maturity, and came forth to assert her rights and her honour, and to commence a new era of truth and reformation.

Meanwhile the powers of the earth decorated an image in gorgeous, meretricious attire, exalted her enriched shrine above all *thrones, and principalities, and powers*; exacted tribute and imposts from the ignorant and deluded and oppressed people, for the magnificent worship of the idol, and for the luxurious support of its proud and pampered priests. All must bow down to this Ashtaroth, or be liable to pains, penalties, and disabilities, intolerable and without number. In the name of Jesus his *little flock* was torn in pieces, or driven into the *howling wilderness*; and every one that could slay them was rewarded as having *done God service*.

O thou, who on earth didst once say, in kindest speech, *the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them; and also, that the thief cometh only to steal, and to kill and destroy, but I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*:—is this persecution for conscience' sake, even now carried on in thy name, *can* it be from thee? Art thou changed in nature, because exalted in power? Hast thou bidden the powers

of the earth to dye their sword in the blood of thy humble, holy, unoffending servants? Ah! no: it is impossible. *Heaven and earth shall be changed and pass away; but thy word shall not pass away; thy nature shall not change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Did he reprove his too zealous servant by saying, *put up thy sword*: I need not and will not allow such weapons in my service; then will he, to the end of time, remain the same; and they *who* in his name *take the sword*, must expect to *perish by the sword*.

Our individual and collective duty then, as Christians, is most apparent, that on no account must we be found on the side of persecution. That must in its nature be wrong; is not required for a divine cause; and bears upon it the blood-stained brand of this world's idolatry and pride.

If exposed to persecution, we must meekly bear it; and exposed we shall be, if true Christians. We ought not, as some have done, to court persecution; but, with a safe conscience, to avoid it; yet it is impossible altogether to escape. We are assured by an apostle, that *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. He that is after the flesh will persecute him that is after the Spirit.* All the world is represented by Cain and Abel.

Under such occurrences, however, we are not left without a guide, without a comforter. Jesus has left directions for our deportment in the most difficult and perilous circumstances; and, abiding by them, we shall either escape the fury of our adversaries,

or we shall demean ourselves with propriety and dignity, so as to recommend the heavenly cause in which we may be called to suffer. Paul says, and he could speak in the tone of a martyr—*if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you:* and Jesus, in stronger phrase, says: *Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven.*

WEDNESDAY.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—John xiii. 34, 35.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.—John xv. 12.

Let love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one to another: with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.—Rom. xii. 9—13.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Follow after charity.—1 Cor. xiv. 1.

Let all your things be done with charity.—1 Cor. xvi. 14.

Love the brotherhood —1 Pet. ii. 17.

Love as brethren.—1 Pet. iii. 8.

And above all things have fervent charity among your-

selves : for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.—
1 Pet. iv. 8.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue ; but in deed and in truth.—1 John iii. 13—18.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.—1 John iii. 23.

Beloved, let us love one another ; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God : he that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.—1 John iv. 1—11, 21.

GREAT and paramount must the authority of him who can, without any improper assumption, say to us—*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. This is my commandment, that ye love one another.* By this prominence given to a new commandment, some disparagement might seem to be cast on the decalogue, but

this was not intended; for, indeed, *all the law is fulfilled in this—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Jesus merely simplifies our duty by enjoining upon us the very essence and principle of the law of God. There is, however, this peculiarity belonging to the *new commandment*, that it establishes the duty of mutual affection for Christ's sake—*As I have loved you, do ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples*.

Doubtless, in the moral law, there is equal power if it could be brought into operation; but that selfishness, which estranges man from God and from his fellow-man, cannot be overcome by the mere motive of duty. We must be *under the law to Christ*, sensible of our deep and lasting obligations to him, grateful and devoted to him as our Redeemer and Saviour, and we shall then naturally feel attached to our brethren in Christ, who are filled with similar emotions, and laid under equal obligations; then, and not before, shall we possess that principle of *love which is the fulfilling of the law*. The love of the brethren is, by the Apostle John, made a test of christian character and real religion; it is an evidence of having *passed from death unto life*. To such an extent is this fraternal love among Christians required, that not only must we ever be ready to share *this world's good* with our brother in need of help, but *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*.

Alas! it is but too evident that *the glory is departed*; that this primitive love is scarcely to be

found in the earth. If we *love one another*, it is an affection little superior to that which is natural among persons following the same pursuits, and pledged to the same cause, whether in arts, sciences, commerce, or recreations. Many *poor saints* are suffered to live in extreme indigence; many others sink into poverty and reproach under the arm of the oppressor; and, should violent *persecution again arise because of the word*, it is to be feared that many might be left to sicken and die in prison, without an effort on the part of their brethren to prevent or save. Such pusillanimity or coldness might have occurred, even in the apostolic age; but it met with apostolic reprobation; for when Paul complains that, on his first appearance before the Emperor Nero, *no man stood with him, but all forsook him, he prays that it may not be laid to their charge*. Jesus discloses to us the principle on which he will proceed in the judgment of the last day; he will begin *at the house of God*. Those who have nourished, clothed, protected, comforted their brethren in want, sickness, or imprisonment, will be pronounced *blessed*, as having *done it unto Christ* himself, in the persons of these whom he calls the *least of his brethren*, and those who have omitted and neglected these tokens of Christian love, whatever their name, attainments, or profession in the Christian world, will be pronounced *cursed*, and doomed to *everlasting fire with the devil and his angels*.

Examine now, O my soul, whether Christian love be perfect in thee. Do *I love in deed and in truth, and not merely in tongue*? Does my love

of the brethren confine itself to my pleasant and respectable acquaintances and friends? Can I hear with unconcern of the sufferings and necessities of my poor brethren and sisters in Christ in my own neighbourhood, and of my own congregation? Can I pass them by unnoticed, unvisited, unrelieved? How dwelleth the love of God in me?

Do I sincerely love the brethren—the *poor* as well as the wealthy; the unpolished and illiterate, as well as the intelligent and the refined? May I more studiously cultivate this affection to all who appear to *love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*; all who bear his image in their temper and character, and while I *do good to all men as opportunity* allows, may I bestow my best and kindest attentions on those who *belong to the household of faith*.

THURSDAY.

COURTESY.

In honour preferring one another.—Rom. xii. 10.

Render honour to whom honour is due.—Rom. xiii. 7.

Honour all men.—1 Pet. ii. 17.

Be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.—

1 Peter iii. 8, 9.

NOTHING tends so much to refine the sentiments and to polish the manners of society as the Christian religion. If there are those who are courteous,

though unbelievers, or uncourteous though Christians, the tendency of the gospel is unaltered : the one class might add sincerity to their politeness, were they true Christians ; and the other might become polite, did they understand better their religion. Not to insist upon those specimens of courteous address which are exhibited by the Apostle Paul in his letters—especially that to Philemon, and in his speeches at the court of Areopagus, and at the tribunal of Agrippa, who can read these exhortations to courtesy in the letters of the fishermen of Galilee, without confessing that their religion had transformed their character from the rough and boisterous, which naturally became the element on which they lived, to the polite and refined, fit to address the highest of earthly ranks ?

The transformations which Christianity has thus effected in tribes and nations within the limits of the present age are truly gratifying and astonishing. The ferocious Africaner changed into the mild and simple Christian ; the cruel and treacherous islanders of the South Sea converted into the most courteous and gentle of human kind, attest the genuine nature of that religion which they have embraced, and which, if thoroughly received, will uniformly produce the same effects throughout the world.

If there are those professing to be Christ's followers, who from natural temper, ignorance, or misconception of their religion, exhibit a character of moroseness or incivility, this is to be regretted on every account ; but it is not to be laid to the

charge of that perfect code of morals which contains these precepts.—*Be courteous: prefer one another in honour: render honour to whom honour is due.* Some may pique themselves on their independence of character by assuming a blunt or reserved manner, and by withholding the common conventional terms of respect due to rank and station; but this is merely gratuitous on their part; and, while it does not recommend either them or their religion the more to the esteem of their fellow men, is a violation of direct precepts which they are dutifully bound to obey. Surely there is some medium between prostrating ourselves like reptiles, at “the golden feet,” as the Burmese when approaching Majesty, and that rude and unyielding stiffness which refuses the smallest token of respect. If honour be due, the debt must be paid.

Beside, we need this courtesy, in its Christian character of sincerity, to smooth the ruggedness of life—as oil to diminish the friction of our moral machinery, and to produce a free, swift, and delightful movement, that shall render the journey of life an agreeable conveyance to our heavenly and eternal home.

Away then with all churlish and unamiable manners from the *Christian* world; and let us cherish that amenity and suavity of temper which will assimilate us to him who was meek and lowly in heart.

FRIDAY.

APOSTACY.

In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.—Luke xvii. 31, 32.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we behold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.—Heb. iii. 12—14.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—Heb. vi. 1—6.

THE apostate is justly deemed an odious character; because he turns away from a good cause, under the influence of sordid motives, to the profession and practice of that which is bad;—and this with knowledge and conviction of its turpitude. He

has been sufficiently enlightened to see and approve the right and true, but he is too depraved to pursue it unto the end. He *runs well for a time*; but at length *Satan hinders him*. Under the allurements of a bribe he will forsake the right way: for *thirty pieces of silver* such a man betrayed his instructor, benefactor, and friend, into the hands of his enemies. By the deceitful blandishments of the world, many, like Demas, have forsaken *the way of truth*. The crime is not impossible in modern times; nor is it limited to such notorious instances as those of Julian or Francis Spira: many are at this moment chargeable with the guilt of having *returned, like the dog, to his vomit again; and like the sow, to her wallowing in the mire*.

The Christian life is to be viewed as an escape from a city in flames. When our Lord so solemnly charges us to *remember Lot's wife*, he points out to us the dreadful consequences of an apostacy from himself. Who can tell what may follow, if, after setting our face heavenward, as if to *flee from the wrath to come*, we turn to look with longing regret on the riches, pleasures, honours, society of the ungodly world? One turn—one look toward Sodom, brought down on the wife of *righteous Lot* the shower of divine vengeance for apostacy. Nothing is more displeasing to God than such conduct. *If any man draw back*, saith He, *my soul shall have no pleasure in him*.

This sin commences, it appears, in *an evil heart of unbelief*: we must, therefore, *take heed lest it be in us*. We are to guard *the heart* with all

diligence; there begins apostacy. Am I less spiritually-minded, less diligent, less devout, less earnest in religion, than at first;—then am I going back with the tide of this world's course, which must end in ruin.

Awake then, my soul, *and put on strength*—renew thy efforts against the stream of vanity and corruption—cry mightily unto the Lord for help, as well as for pardon; and remember that thou canst not be made a *partaker of Christ*, unless thou *hold fast the beginning of thy confidence steadfast unto the end*.

SATURDAY.

FIDELITY TO GOD.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

MANIFOLD indeed is the *grace of God*! various in kind, and bountiful in degree! To one is given wealth, to another wisdom and knowledge, to another eloquence—all for mutual benefit; that, by the faithful application and use of each gift, more

good may be produced than by the equal and similar bestowment on all: as in trade or art, the comfort, improvement, and well-being of society are greatly promoted by the separate attention and pursuit of the individual to his own particular avocation.

Let me, then, consider how I may be employed as a *steward* of God. Great and responsible character! may I feel the honour! may I diligently discharge the duty! What hath God eminently intrusted to me?—Is it property? let me use it as not mine, but my employer's, to whom I shall be called to render a strict and just account: is it wisdom, learning, eloquence? let them all be consecrated to Jesus and his cause. Whatever I undertake in the business of life, let me consider as sacred, having the glory of God for its end. In every station, and calling, and engagement, may I remember that I am the servant of the Lord; and that being redeemed with *the precious blood of Christ*, I am *not my own*, but his;—my time, health, influence, abilities, possessions, all the property of him *whose I am and whom I serve*. Let my constant concern be to *glorify God in my body and my spirit, which are his*. Far from being gratified with the accumulation of wealth, learning, honour, power, for their own sake, if they be intrusted to my hands, may I most faithfully use them *as a good steward of the manifold grace of God, that he in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

SUNDAY.

DESIRE OF HEAVEN.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.—Col. iii. 1—3.

THE heavenly-minded Baxter, on drawing towards the close of his long and useful life, prepared for his departure by writing his “Dying Thoughts,” a work eminently fitted to inspire the Christian with a desire of heaven, and for which he received the cordial thanks of the noble patriot, Lord William Russell, a short time before his execution, as having not a little contributed to his support and relief, and to his preparation for his painful departure out of this world.

Let us sympathize with such holy and spiritual aspirations as these.

“Willingly depart, O lingering soul! It is from a Sodom: though there be righteous Lots in it, they are not without their sad blemishes. Hast thou so often lamented the general blindness and wickedness of the world, and art thou loth to leave it for a better? How often wouldest thou have rejoiced to have seen but the dawning of a day

of universal peace and reformation ! And wouldest thou not see it where it shines in perfect beauty ! Hast thou prayed and laboured so hard to have the pleasure of a light at midnight, and is it not thy desire to behold the sun itself ? Will the things of heaven please thee no where but on earth, where they are least and weakest ? Away, away ! Vindictive flames are ready to consume this sinful world. Sinners are *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*. Look not then behind thee. Away from this unhappy world ! *Press toward the mark ; looking for and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God* : as this world hath used thee, it would still do so. When thou hast fared best in it, no thanks to it, but to God. If thou hast had manifold deliverances and preservations, and hast been fed with angels' food, love not the wilderness, but thy heavenly Guide, Protector, and Deliverer. Does God in great mercy make pain and feebleness the harbingers of death, and wilt thou not understand their business ? Wouldest thou dwell with thy beloved body in the grave, where it will rot in loathsome darkness ? If not, why should it now, in its painful languor, seem to thee a more pleasing habitation, than the glorious presence of thy Lord ? In the grave it will be at rest, nor at night wish, O that it were morning ! Nor in the morning say, When will it be night ! And is this a dwelling fit for thy delight ? Patience in it, while God will so try thee, is thy duty ; but is such patience a better and sweeter life than rest and joy ?”

Surely such a soul has *set its affections on things above : its treasure is in heaven !*

MONDAY.

GENEROSITY.

Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.—Luke vi. 38.

Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly or of necessity ; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.—2 Cor. ix. 7, 8.

BECAUSE all love to receive, therefore all commend generosity, but few practise it ; and those who do, in most cases, act more from the impulse of the moment, than from fixed principle ; more from ostentation or shame than from love to God or man.

In these precepts, addressed to the Christian, there is a provision made against that natural and universal form of selfishness which, in the transactions of business, meanly and unjustly employs every little artifice to appear just in weight and measure, and yet rob the scale and the bushel.

Such conduct can hardly be imagined in him who has *received mercy from the Lord*. We who have so *freely received* an abundant and overflowing forgiveness of our sins for Christ's sake, must imitate the generosity of our heavenly Father, in all the intercourse of life ; and not contenting ourselves with mere justice in our dealings, are called upon to acknowledge in the daily business of the world, by liberal weight and measure, that we owe all our possessions, comforts, prosperity, yea, our life and salvation, to the benignity and mercy of God.

Some may here demur, and reply, that their small gains allow not of generosity. Let them, however, remember, that He *who knoweth all things* hath commanded it, and that to him *the scant measure is abominable, and the wicked balances with the bag of deceitful weights*. He who is so scrupulously exact, is likely soon to become less than just.

But our kind and gracious Saviour would enjoin nothing really injurious to us. Cold calculation might reject the precept with scorn, but he who obeys has a promise of prosperity. Men will prefer dealing with those who are uniformly liberal and generous, rather than with those who are so close and contracted. A generous mode of trade will draw after it a prosperous and gainful business, for it has in it the "blessing" both of God and man.

In respect to our voluntary contributions toward charitable and religious objects, having considered what is required and what we can afford,

and having formed a purpose as to the sum devoted, we are to look upon it as *the Lord's*. To alter it, without good reason, is sacrilege. As we seldom miscalculate our means of giving, there is but little danger of excess in charity, while there is much danger of deficiency. I would rather err on the side of generosity than on that of parsimony.

Let us then give liberally, *according to the ability which God giveth*: let us give cheerfully and readily. How does such a disposition enhance the value of the gift! Let us not *delay* our benefaction; it is not asked before it is wanted, and, given quickly, its worth is doubled. *Say not unto thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.*

If any shall entertain a morbid fear of impoverishing himself by generous acts, let him do all in faith, as well as with caution; and from the consoling assurance of the Apostle, rely on the *God who is able to make all grace abound toward him; that he, having always all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.* The All-bountiful One must have kindred spirits with himself, as his almoners in this world; and they who can believe how *rich in mercy* and goodness he is, *whose is the earth and the fulness thereof*, will not scruple to give generously and cheerfully that portion of the divine bounty which is entrusted to their hands.

TUESDAY.

TEMPTATION.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man : but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin : and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death —James i. 12—15.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.—James iv. 7.

As temptation or trial is the appointed condition of man in the present life, we are here directed how to conduct ourselves when exposed to it. We are to *endure* the trial without murmuring, impatience, rebellion, or compliance. We are not to impute any evil motives or unholy conduct to the Blessed God. We are to trace the immediate temptation either to our own lust, or to the artifice and power of Satan, or to both combined. It may be difficult to distinguish the operations of Satan from the natural working of sin within us ; but being warned that *our enemy the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*, our duty is to be always on our guard and ready to *resist him, steadfast in the faith*. This we must do by constant vigilance, prayer, meditation of Scripture, the use of religious ordinances, and

trust in Jesus, who hath, *overcome the wicked one*, and who was *manifested to destroy the works of the devil*; who was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin; and since he himself hath suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.

Our safety then lies in *resistance*: the moment we relax or parley we are undone. *Blessed is he*, then, *who endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life*. This promise is sufficient to animate us in wrestling with the powers of darkness and *striving against sin*. We are sure of victory if we continue resistance. This certainly cannot be affirmed of any other conflict; but, as the Christian life is one continued trial, from the commencement to the close, our gracious God has given us a kind assurance of final triumph if we *endure temptation*. Every time we yield, there is a doubt thrown in the way. Our success becomes questionable. To God the result is known, but not to us. If then we would enjoy *the full assurance of hope to the end*, we must be *strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus*; we must *watch and pray that we enter not into temptation*; and never consider ourselves out of danger, till we find our eternal rest in the bosom of our Lord.

W E D N E S D A Y.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—John xvi. 35.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.—Eph. vi. 10—18

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.—Phil. i. 27—30.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,

but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees: and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.—Heb. xii. 11—13.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. ii. 10.

COURAGE is a noble quality, which pre-eminently becomes a Christian. He has commenced a great undertaking—to *overcome the world*;—a greater still;—to *overcome the wicked one*; and the greatest of all to conquer himself, having a *heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*. This three-headed monster, more frightful than any of those fabled by the classic muse, withstands the Christian on his way to paradise, and it must be slain, or he cannot taste the golden fruits of that heavenly garden. Thus hath God ordained that we should *enter into life, through much tribulation*. But while He has permitted our foes to obstruct and dispute our passage, it is only that our desires of the prize of celestial bliss may be quickened, and that the heroic virtues of the Christian character may be developed; that *the grace of God in us may be glorified*; that our feebleness and insufficiency of ourselves may set off his power and faithfulness in strengthening and supporting us through the conflict; and that, to

eternal ages, we may adore him as *making us more than conquerors*.

Oh! 'tis a scene which draws down blessed angels from their princedom and glorious habitations, to behold a little army of saints scattered into small bands or single-handed, without *carnal weapons* and earthly powers, contending manfully and most courageously with the mighty, and noble, and learned of this world; *wrestling not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spirits of wickedness in heavenly places*, “ which employ their utmost strength to ruin us, and still keep their regular subordination, that their efforts of mischief may be more effectual.”*

If all the hosts of Israel and *the armies of the aliens*, were drawn up to gaze upon the unequal contest between the shepherd-boy with his sling and stone, and the Philistian giant with a spear *like a weaver's beam*, in so extraordinary a spectacle, we may also behold the representation of a Christian, weak in himself, but courageous in the Lord, encountering boldly and resolutely the most formidable of his foes, and triumphing over him in the end.

Tribulation of all kinds we must therefore expect, while in this world. Let us lay our account to meet with adversaries of various kinds in our way to the kingdom : but let *the people that know their God be strong and do exploits*, as he hath

* Doddridge in loco.

promised by his servant Daniel, the prophet. Behold, feeble saint, by thy side, *one like the appearance of a man*: hear him saying to thee, *O greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee, be strong—yea, be strong. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Take the whole armour of God, both offensive and defensive; stand up like a heavenly warrior in this complete panoply, and, facing thy most terrible foe—never turning thy back on the enemy, thou art invincible: thou shalt verily possess the kingdom for ever and ever:*

“ A feeble saint shall win the day,
Tho’ death and hell obstruct the way.”

THURSDAY.

PRESUMPTION.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.—Matt. iv. 7.—
Luke iv. 12.

Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.—James iv. 13—17.

DEPRAVED man is a perverse and self-sufficient creature. *Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.* It is by long and painful experience only, that he can be broke into any acknowledgment of his dependence on his Maker for *life and breath and all things.*

God has, indeed, bestowed upon us active powers, and made labour our employment and our duty; but, as we are nothing without his perpetual aid and support, and direction, *in all our ways* we are bound to *acknowledge him.* The ungodly proceed from day to day in their occupations without directing a thought to God. They rely alone on their own skill, or foresight, or industry, and trust to a non-entity called chance or luck, for success in doubtful cases. Not scrupulous about the means employed, so that their end be accomplished, they thus *live without God in the world.* Roving in quest of gain to the ends of the earth, they presumptuously rely wholly on themselves, and refer nothing to *the Lord's will,* but are bent exclusively on the accomplishment of their own. How many are acting in the spirit, if they use not the words, of the Dutch trader, who declared, that "if he could get any thing by it, he would run his vessel into the mouth of hell, though he should thereby scorch his sails?"

This is the spirit of worldly presumption. But, though Christians can scarcely be supposed to go this length, they are nevertheless liable to presumption of another kind, against which they are warned by their Lord. He was tempted to this sin by the devil, when he urged him to cast him-

self down from a lofty pinnacle of the temple; quoting, as a warrant for so doing, that precious promise of God, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

In the former case we perceive a presumptuous dependence on human exertions, to the exclusion of divine providence: in the latter, a temptation to a presumptuous reliance on providence, without human exertions. The devil, like the Jesuits, suits his doctrine to his party. Some shall be induced to act without providence, and others to expect that providence shall act without them.

It is evident, then, that our duty lies in the mean between these extremes. Every rational, lawful, and prudent exertion must be diligently performed by us, as suitable means to an end; but all must be done with a devout sense of the superintending, sustaining, and efficient providence of God. He who thus lives in God, shall enjoy the life of God in him: he shall not greatly err, while he *doeth justly, loveth mercy, and walketh humbly with his God.*

FRIDAY.

PARTY SPIRIT.

If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.—Galat. v. 15.

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.—James v. 9.

“ I SEE no cause,” says the learned and judicious Dr. Manton, “ why we should not retain the proper sense of the word, *Groan not one against another, brethren*; for the apostle seemeth to me herein to tax those mutual injuries and animosities wherewith the Christians of those times, having banded under the names of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision*, did grieve one another, and give each other cause to *groan*; so that they did not only sigh under the oppressions of the rich persecutors, but under the injuries which they sustained from many of the brethren, who together with them did profess the holy faith; which exposition will well suit with the state of those times and the present context. The apostle is persuading them to patience; now, because the pressures did arise, not only from enemies, but brethren, he seeketh to dissuade them from a practice so scandalous, lest they should all be involved and wrapped up in the common ruin. What! should *brethren grudge one against another*? Take heed, such practices seldom escape without a quick revenge. Observe, hence, many times differences may so far be heightened among brethren, that they may groan one against another, as much as against the common enemy. Paul, speaking of the state of the primitive times, sheweth how Christians did *bite and devour one another*. To show their rage, he

useth words proper to the fights and quarrels of beasts; thus usually it falleth out, when contests arise in the church, religious hatreds are most deadly. Thus, Luther complaineth, that he never had a worse enemy than Carolostadius; and Zuinglius, that the Papists were never so bitter to him as his friends. 'Tis sad when we dispute one against another, and tongue is armed against tongue, and pen against pen; but 'tis sadder when we groan one against another, and appeal is set against appeal, lambs acting the part of wolves."

"Mutual groanings and grudgings between brethren, are a usual forerunner of judgment. After biting and devouring, there followeth consuming. It cometh to pass, partly by the providence and ordination of God, that wanton contests are not cured but by deep afflictions; and, when spirits are once exulcerated, there is no likelihood of agreement but in a prison. The warm sun maketh the wood warp and cleave asunder. In prosperity, we wax wanton, and divide. When the dog is let loose, the sheep run together: usually, in troubles, there are not so many scatterings and disgregations in Christ's flock. Our divisions give the adversary an advantage: we would be as wise to reconcile ourselves, as they to combine against us. Nazianzen was wont to call them *the common reconcilers*: but party-making and faction make men blind: engaged persons will not consider, till all be undone; a little before Dioclesian's persecution, there were sad divisions in the church: they burned, saith Eusebius, with *mutual intestine discords*."

These pointed observations on the precepts should cause us to examine ourselves, and inquire *what manner of spirit we are of?*

While, in the present state of religion, I must associate with one description of fellow Christians in preference to another, let it be *for the truth's sake*, and not with a bitter or infuriated zeal for a party or a name.

SATURDAY.

SUBMISSION TO GOD.

He giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God.—James iv. 6, 7.

HE who can with sincerity say, as Jesus did, *Not my will, but thine be done*, fulfils this commandment. But oh! how difficult for the proud, self-willed heart of man! The chief contention between God and man, now, as between God and fallen angels heretofore, is respecting power. The subject has risen up in rebellion against his eternal, holy, and gracious Sovereign: the servant disputes the authority of his kind and just master; the child spurns the mild and wise restraints of a tender father. Man would be almighty. This affectation he learned from *the god of this world*. 'Tis the very core of the grand rebellion. This

contest has been raging here for six thousand years—how much longer elsewhere, we know not. It is yet furiously proceeding on the part of men and fallen angels; and God is still *resisting the proud*. Wonderful patience! Astonishing long-suffering of the Omnipotent Creator of these presumptuous rebels! Why hath he not, long since, crushed us all to the dust? Why hath not hell enlarged herself, and opened her mouth, without measure; and the glory, and the multitude, and the pomp of the proud world descended into it, and her jaws closed upon the nuisance, that it should no more be seen in the fair creation of God, no more disturb heaven, or trouble earth? *Thy ways, O Lord, are not our ways, nor thy thoughts our thoughts; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts.*

But how protracted soever this contest, who can doubt the issue? *Wo to the man that striveth with his Maker.*

Let me not, then, be so infatuated as to contend against God. When *I know what the will of the Lord is*, may it be *my meat and drink to do it*. As it is my duty, so may it be my delight to search out of the book of the Lord the intimations of his holy will and pleasure. Let this be my counsellor and guide through life; and when its reproofs and admonitions strike most home to my heart and conscience, when its injunctions run most counter to flesh and blood, then may I *submit to God*, and not resist him *to whom power belongeth*.

When corrected by the chastening of the Almighty, may I not murmur and rebel, lest God should in displeasure cease to use *the rod of correction*, and begin to *whet the glittering sword* of judgment. Israel was so often chastised without submitting, that God turns from this manner of dealing with them, saying, *Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, when chastisements have but hardened us in pride, and self-will, and love of the world. *If we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, then how shall we contend with horses?*

Submission, then, meek and lowly submission, to the authority of the eternal and sovereign authority of the great and blessed God, my Creator, benefactor, ruler, and Saviour, who requires of me submission only to his wisdom, tenderness, and care, is my duty under all circumstances, through the period of this mortal life; remembering that *he who exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

SUNDAY.

BACKSLIDING.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right

hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.—Rev. ii. 1—5.

THERE is something peculiarly delightful in *first love*. It is associated in our recollections with all the charms of spring, and all the happy and undepressed expectations of youth. The freshness and ardour of a pure and honourable passion is experienced by the young convert, on yielding up his heart to the Lord. He is willingly *drawn by the cords of love*, to follow Jesus, *whithersoever he goeth*, and no service is too difficult or too perilous for him to undertake; no command too hard to be obeyed. He has only to *know his Lord's will*, and he then *runs cheerfully in the way of his commandments*.

It is this state of mind in which God takes delight: Thus he says, by the prophet Jeremiah, *Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord,*

and the first fruits of his increase : all that devour him shall offend ; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord. Alas ! Israel continued not in their *first love* ; and, for their multiplied backslidings, *wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.* And where is now the church of Ephesus, which received so many commendations from the Lord Jesus for their works, their labour, their patience, their perseverance, their courage ? The threatened visitation has long ago been executed, and *the candlestick is removed out of its place.*

These are fearful examples of the danger of backsliding in our Christian course. What though we may still retain the Christian name and character, and perform many things, or endure many sufferings ? What though we may have increased in knowledge and reputation as Christians ? If we have *fallen away from our first love*—if we are not *doing the first works*—if we have not *the dew of our youth*—if we are less zealous, less self-denying, less in earnest about salvation, less devotional, less fervent in our feelings of gratitude to our Redeemer, and have, in consequence, slackened in our vigilance and our obedience ; we have fallen into a state injurious to ourselves, and displeasing to our Lord and Master.

Alas ! upon the review of life, who must not confess that he is guilty of this sin ? Who does not look back with a sigh of regret on the early days of his Christian life ? Who has not lost something of his simplicity, or purity, or fervour, by long intercourse with the world, yea, even with the

religious world? Happy is that Christian to whom the Son of God, who hath eyes like to a flame of fire, saith, I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last, i. e. the last works to be more than the first.

While his eye penetrates through all disguise, let us examine our state; and endeavour to remember how we at first felt and acted, when we beheld Jesus as *evidently crucified for us; what godly sorrow for sin; what carefulness; what fear; what vehement desire; what zeal!* Have we fallen from this eminence; are we conscious of the difference? have we *gone after our lovers, and forgotten our Lord?* Surely it is high time to wake out of sleep. Repent and do the first works, says our offended Lord; or else *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. The lion of the tribe of Judah hath roared, who shall not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?* The issue must be dreadful, unless we obey the warning voice. *I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. I will return unto the Lord my God; for I have fallen by mine iniquity. I will take with me words, and turning to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously. Oh speak comfortably unto my soul, O Lord, and say, I will heal your backsliding. I will love you freely; for mine anger is turned away from thee. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.*

His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

MONDAY.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

But meat commendeth us not to God ; for neither, if we eat, are we the better ; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols ; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.—1 Cor. viii. 8—13.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake ; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go ; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his sake that shewed it and for conscience sake : for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof : conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other : for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience ? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks ? Whether therefore ye eat or

drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God : even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.—1 Cor. x. 24—33.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.—1 Cor. xi. 1.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.—Gal. v. 1.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days ; which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ.—Col. iii. 16, 17.

THE *world is yours*, saith the apostle Paul to all true believers in Christ. *Use the world, but not abuse it.*

This Christian liberty is put under the restraint of the law of conscience ; and that is not *a law to itself*, but, as in the precepts before us, is placed under proper regulation. The convert from heathenism or Judaism is taught to renounce all distinctions of meats and drinks, and all superstitious observance of *days, and months, and times, and years*. The religion of formalists is comprised in these things. But the enlightened and spiritual Christian is taught to consider them as *beggarly elements*, which keep the soul *in bondage*. God hath *called us to liberty* in these things. As to meats and drinks, we have only to choose in the market that which is convenient and agreeable—

the whole is set before us by a bountiful providence, that we may eat and give God thanks. *God has cleansed it all for his Christian family, and we need ask no question about things strangled. Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused that is good for food.*

And as to days and times, none are set apart by God for holy purposes, except the Sabbath or Lord's-day. All other days, be they fasts or be they feasts, are of mere human appointment, and carry no *authority* whatever with them. If we think it expedient to observe such days, we are at liberty so to do ; and if not, we may reject the appointment. He who would *compel* another to use certain foods and reject others, or observe certain days of fasting or feasting, on account of religion, is either a total stranger to the Christian law, or he is a tyrannical oppressor of his brethren.

All such human impositions we are called upon to resist, not knowing *whereunto these things may grow*. We are, in such circumstances, commanded not to yield obedience to an illegitimate authority ; but to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage*.

At the same time, we are to *take heed lest, by any means, our liberty become a stumbling-block to them that are weak*. We must never use our Christian liberty in the spirit of bravery and ostentation ; as if to display before all, the glorious privilege to which *we* have attained ; lest, in so doing, we embolden the ignorant and feeble-

minded to do the same things, without a safe conscience, without a thorough conviction of the entire abrogation of all heathenish and Jewish distinctions of meats and days.

But, though we may not, in an over-confident spirit, exercise our Christian liberty, we are to guard against the opposite extreme of bringing ourselves into bondage and keeping our weaker brethren in it, by any sinful compliances with the customs or the institutions of the world, under the name of religion. It may be as much for the welfare of our weaker brother, to set him an example of non-compliance, in a case where, through ignorance or timidity, he would have submitted, as for our own privilege and comfort, in the assertion of our freedom. Of this every one must judge for himself, taking care that *whether he eat or drink, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all, not for his own glory or his own humour, but for the glory of God*:—not in the spirit of contradiction, but in the spirit of charity: asserting his liberty on all proper occasions, in order that he may thereby as one of the *lights of the world, shining in a dark place*, illustrate the excellent nature and true design of the gospel—to draw men off from their natural attachment to the shadowy forms of will-worship and superstition, to the substantial practice of righteousness and genuine piety:—to protest against the *merit* of fasts or feasts, or holy days; and to point their attention to the great sacrifice of the cross, which *cleanseth from all sin*.

Acting in this spirit, and for these sacred ends, while we are using and maintaining our Christian

liberty, we shall preserve *a conscience without offence toward God*, we shall be in little danger of making *a weak brother to offend*, and we shall *give no just offence to the Jews or the Gentiles or the church of God*.

TUESDAY.

CHRISTIAN PATIENCE.

In your patience possess ye your souls.—Luke xxi. 19.

Patient in tribulation.—Rom. xii. 12.

Add to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness.—
2 Pet. i. 6.

Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.—James i. 4.

Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient ; stablish your hearts ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.—James v. 7, 8.

This is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even heremunto were ye called ; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.—1 Pet. ii. 19—21.

THIS difficult and important duty consists in the endurance of all the pains and troubles of life without complaining, and in waiting for the final

accomplishment of the gracious promises of God respecting help and deliverance in this world, and salvation in that which is to come. This virtue, therefore, in the Christian, is superior to that of the heathen philosophy, which was not sufficient for ordinary minds, nor even to preserve the masters of human wisdom from occasional sallies of impatience and complaint.

But the motives operating in every Christian are of sufficient strength to support his mind, not only under the ordinary trials of life, but under the greatest calamities which can befall him. Other men may be as patient as they can, because fretfulness and complaint, instead of assisting them, will but aggravate their trouble ; or because they shall otherwise appear undignified or weak ; but these props are by no means secure, and have often failed in time of need. The Christian is called to patience from higher motives. *Be patient, brethren, says an apostle, unto the coming of the Lord.* Like the husbandman waiting for the reward of his toil, *be ye also patient, stablish your hearts ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

If trouble arise to a mere man of the world, from reproach, loss of reputation, or poverty ; if then he is deserted, however unjustly, what resource or solace has he to flee to ? The world has flung him off, to whom can he turn for comfort ? The rest of his days he will spend in vain complaint and misanthropic thoughts—perhaps in secret, if not open, upbraidings of an unkind and unjust providence.

Not thus the Christian. If *for conscience toward God he endure grief and suffer wrongfully; if he has done well and suffers for it*, his duty is to *take it patiently*, referring his cause to God; and the motive to enable him thus to act against nature is, that *unto this heroic conduct he is called*; because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example that we should follow his steps*.

Here then is not only a motive but a model—one that is *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. The character of Jesus is the Christian's study. If the statuary will spend days and years in the contemplation of a noble fragment of antiquity, a *Jupiter Tonans*, or an *Apollo Belvidere*, in order that he might achieve some labour of art, approaching to the perfection of his model; much more will the Christian look daily and hourly to Jesus, *the perfection of moral beauty*, to catch the lines of grace which beam in every feature of his countenance; and not least that of meek-eyed patience, so soft and subdued, after having *learned obedience by the things that he suffered*.

Pardon, O Lord, for the sake of the patient obedience of Jesus, all my fretfulness, all my complaining, all my hard thoughts of thee, and thy ways of righteousness and goodness toward me; and, by thy Spirit, enable me to be patient in tribulation, possessing my soul therein, till I become perfect in this grace and duty, and am prepared for the kingdom of heaven.

W E D N E S D A Y.

COVETOUSNESS.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ;
fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry.—Col. iii. 5.

He said unto them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke xii. 15.

Fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.—Eph. v. 3.

AS the second table of the Decalogue concludes with a prohibition against *coveting any thing that is our neighbour's*, we may infer that peculiar stress was intended to be laid on this command. Well might the apostle say, *the law is spiritual* ; for not only does it commence with requiring the affections to be placed on God as supreme, but it ends with requiring that we should not, even *in thought*, wrong our neighbour. Not only is the overt act of violence forbidden, but the very disposition which leads to it. How holy, how just, how good is this law ! Happy is it for man that Jesus came from heaven, not only to *die the just for the unjust*, in order to atone for our transgressions of this law ; and also to set us a perfect example of its excellence ; but that he has made

the law of Sinai the rule by which his disciples are to act. The ceremonial law fulfilled its office as a *school-master to lead us to Christ*, the great sacrifice for sin, and then vanished to be seen no more; but the moral law is of perpetual obligation on all who hear it; and, while to the impenitent sinner it exhibits an aspect of terror, from its glorious purity, and thus condemns him as a transgressor, when by the Holy Spirit he is led to the cross of Jesus and sees in *him* all his sin forgiven, and all the Saviour's righteousness imputed to himself by an act of faith, he can with that strong internal vision which realizes Jesus as his Redeemer, behold the law of God as his bright and sure guide to immortality—the model of perfect holiness—the reflected image of the Son of God, to which he himself, as part of his salvation, is *predestinated to be conformed*. Into the hand of this celestial guide he places his own, and says—henceforth thou art my counsellor, my companion, my friend; and with thee I will, by the grace of God, walk, till I behold the face of him who wrote with his own finger these holy, awful, delightful words, which as flaming gems thou bearest on thy bosom.

And can such a man, then, any longer walk in that company which the precepts before us proscribe? *How can we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* It behoves those who say they are Christians, to separate themselves most carefully from the impure associates, which are linked together in these precepts. There is as much impurity of *mind* in covetousness as in lascivious-

ness. He who gives his *whole heart* to earthly objects is an idolater.

Let me, then, as a disciple of Jesus, remember his words, to *beware of covetousness*. Never may I fall into that *snare of the devil* to suppose, that the happiness of my life *consists in the abundance of my possessions*.

“We need not,” says a Christian moralist,* “go among villains and people of scandalous characters, to find out those who desire a *thousand times* more than they want; who have an eagerness to be every day richer and richer; who catch at all ways of gain that are not scandalous; and who hardly think any thing enough, except it equals or exceeds the estate of their neighbours.”

Every one points a finger against the miser; but he who brands the *species* with reprobation, may be cherishing the *genus* in his own heart. Without being misers, we may be very covetous.

THURSDAY.

FEASTS.

Then said he unto him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee: but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the

* Law, on Christian Perfection, p. 75.

maimed, the lame, the blind ; and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee ; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.—Luke xiv. 12—14.

OF human laws, some are so severe as to be found impracticable, and others so antiquated and unsuitable, as to fall into universal neglect. Were the kingdom of Jesus and his laws of *this world*, one would suppose the precept before us were one of those antiquated statutes, which time and the changes of society had rendered altogether obsolete. But as the reign of Jesus on earth is in the heart of man, and his kingdom embraces the human race in all its breadth and variety, to the end of time, no statute of his realm can become obsolete, because none is unsuitable to mankind at large.

Hence the command of Jesus, on the subject of feasts, can no more be considered obsolete, than that concerning equity.

But where is the Christian to be found, who has complied with this injunction ? Many wealthy disciples of the Lord are daily preparing feasts for their *friends*, their *brethren*, their *kinsmen*, and their *rich neighbours* : but when are seen at those tables, *the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind* ? It may perhaps be said in reply, that we are to observe this law in the *spirit*, rather than in the *letter* ; that it is observed when the poor are relieved by food and medicine ; and more espe-

cially, when, on public occasions of rejoicing, or when there is a surplus of some benevolent fund, or the season of the year calls for charity, the poor are treated with a plentiful supply of bread and viands suitable to their plain appetite and character.

If this be the fulfilment of the commandment, it is surely but *the half* which is performed; for what becomes of the negative part, which says, *When thou makest a feast, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours*; adding this reason, *lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee*? Language cannot be more explicit;—a law, both negative and positive, could not be put in plainer terms.

It will here be asked, what, then, are we never to invite to dinner or supper a friend, or brother, or relative, or rich neighbour? Are we never, on extraordinary public occasions, such as the proclamation of peace, or the triumph of liberty, or the visit of some distinguished patriot or philanthropist, to *make a dinner or a supper* in honour of the event? Or, if allowed, are the guests to be only *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind*? Are we, moreover, debarred the pleasure of providing an entertainment for relatives and friends, on the wedding-day, the birth-day, the religious anniversary, and such occasions? Is not this to banish from society half its innocent enjoyments and recreations; to shed a gloom over families and neighbourhoods; and to present Christianity in no

very attractive form to the world? Besides, did not Jesus himself accept of invitations to such entertainments, and his disciples with him?

To all this it may be replied, Jesus by no means lays a prohibition on entertainments of this sort. As they naturally arise out of the events and relations of life, so they may prudently be given and received.

But the case in question is, when a person, for the sake of conviviality and the pleasures of the table, and with a view to gratify friends, brethren, relatives, and rich neighbours, invites what is called "a party" to *dinner* and *supper*, with great preparations, at much expense, and with the expectation of being invited in return to a similar banquet; and thus a round of visiting and feasting is kept up, nourishing luxury and sensuality, vanity and pride, and the love of the world; and indisposing the heart for the serious duties of life, and preparation for death and eternity.

This being the course of the ungodly world, is forbidden to us who would follow Christ. If we have the means of making such entertainments, we must, according to the commandment, seek out *the poor, the disabled, the lame, the blind—especially those belonging to the household of faith*—and do for them what the world does for its friends. That is a cold and haughty interpretation of the text, which says, "Either do this, or what is equivalent to us in respect of charge, and more advantageous to them and their families, viz. to send them meat or money, to refresh them at home." *This we may do, and not leave the other undone.*

Doubtless Jesus had good reasons for telling us to invite the poor and wretched to our table, on festive occasions. Let those who have never obeyed the precept, only once comply with it, and they will better understand the nature and force of those reasons than any conjecture can supply.

If we make a dinner or a supper, then, for feasting sake, let it be in charity to the poor and miserable. *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.* Yes, give him wine at your table, wealthy believer in Jesus, the very best wine you have. You will be told, by high expository authority, to let the entertainment be *plain and frugal*. Does Jesus limit his commandment to such narrow terms? Ah! how difficult to enlarge our hearts to the extent of his kind, tender, liberal appointments! How difficult to place myself by the side of a poor and wretched brother, and say of myself, *What hast thou which thou hast not received? Why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* Perhaps it may please the Master of the heavenly feast, to place me by the side of this poor, despised brother, at his table in his kingdom, and even in the lower place; for there *the first shall be last, and the last first*. Let me not then despise or dishonour my brother, because he is poor and distressed, but honour him and help him the more.

Thus shall *the brother of low degree rejoice that he is exalted, and the rich that he is made low*. Thus shall *the rich and the poor meet together*

with the special blessing of *the Lord*, who is *the maker of them all*, Who would not make all his feasts *agapae*, or feasts of charity, if he is to *be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*?

FRIDAY.

FEAR OF GOD.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.—Heb. xii. 28, 29.

Fear God.—1 Pet. ii. 17.

As in the natural, so in the moral world, God has placed principles in opposition to each other. In nature we perceive the antagonist actions of the centrifugal and centripetal forces, and the attracting and the repelling poles, upon which all the great revolutions and changes of the material universe appear to depend: and in the moral constitution of man there is a similar provision, whereby the balance of the mental powers is preserved, while the whole of the complicated and wonderful machinery of mind is put into vigorous and perpetual motion. Hence we are actuated by desires and aversions, pains and pleasures, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.

Fear, therefore, being a natural and essential principle of our moral nature, is not to be regarded as unmanly and irrational, and deserving of being eradicated, if possible, from the human breast. It is, indeed, with each and all of the other passions, liable to disorder ; yet, regulated by reason, and still more by religion, it becomes an important auxiliary in all the efforts and enterprizes of man ; and, as in the precepts before us, appears a motive and principle of the highest power, which we are called upon to cherish in the service of God.

There is, indeed, a fear, which is described by the apostle John, as *having torment* ; and he says, that *perfect love casteth out fear* ; that, *he that feareth is not made perfect in love*. The passion in that state, therefore, is unfit for the Christian breast ; and becomes only the man, who, under a sense of guilt and misery, has not yet seen Jesus as *able to save to the uttermost them who come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them* ; but is still under the condemnation of his conscience and the violated law of God. Such a man may well fear ; because, to his view, there is nothing before him but *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil*. This kind of fear is not wrong. It is salutary and necessary to urge the soul to seek its salvation by *fleeing from the wrath to come*.

But, even when this tormenting fear shall have been allayed, all fear is not to cease ; the fear of punishment must be converted into the fear of offending a merciful yet holy and righteous God.

Hence the injunction to *seek grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear*; and hence the terse command by the apostle—*Fear God*.

It becomes me, a creature of yesterday, a sinful and hell-deserving child of Adam, to think of the eternal and blessed Jehovah with profound awe and reverence; to act, as ever under his all-seeing eye; and to speak of him without any approach to levity. When I address him by prayer or praise, far from copying the affronting and coarse familiarity which I have seen in some, and the light and irreverent manner of others, I would be seriously and deeply impressed with the reality of the divine presence, and remember the injunction of Solomon: “*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore, let thy words be few. Thus would I live in the fear of the Lord, all the day long*; and when exalted to a purer and brighter sphere, where, by the ineffable grace of God, I may be permitted to behold his face, and contemplate his glories for ever, my reverence and awe shall bow me down before him with the most profound sense of my unworthiness to appear in his presence, or to pronounce his hallowed name:

“The more thy glories strike mine eye,
The humbler I shall lie;

Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise,
Immeasurably high.”

SATURDAY.

GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.—James i. 26.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.

My brethren, these things ought not so to be.—James iii. 10.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good ; let him seek peace, and ensue it.—1 Pet. iii. 10, 11.

My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak.—James i. 19.

My brethren, be not many masters (or teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.—James iii. 1.

FROM these few precepts, distinct from many indirect injunctions, it is at once evident, that the human tongue, which is divinely pronounced to be *an unruly evil that no man can tame*, is placed under the regulation of Christian law. If no other power can avail to tame this fierce hyæna, this fiery dragon, it must be brought under the discipline of the gospel. Jesus shall have the honour of subduing the untameable monster, and it shall draw his triumphant chariot, guided by a gentle rein.

How base and ungrateful is it, to abuse so noble

a faculty, so divine a gift as human speech! *How forcible are right words*: how precious are *the words of the wise*: how cheering and pleasant the words of kindness and comfort! That tongue deserves to be smitten with eternal silence which is *like a sharp razor working deceitfully*, and which is *full of deadly poison*. And yet multitudes of such tongues *walk through the earth*, scattering every where mischief and destruction.

Well, this is only what must be expected from an ignorant, ungodly, impure world, faithfully devoted to the service of him who was a liar from the beginning, its own god, and *the enemy of all righteousness*. But better things are to be hoped from the *Christian world*. And yet even there one perceives that too much licence is given to the tongue. The apostles, Peter and James, had occasion to reprove professing Christians, even in the golden age of our faith; and, in these baser times, what can be expected but a tincture of their degeneracy?

What care, then, should we take that we *offend not in word*! How strict should be the *watch over the door of our lips*! An idle, profane, impure, passionate word once escaped, cannot be recalled. *Behold, how great a mass, a little spark kindleth*. The evil consequences of even one improper word, and the state of mind indicated by it, are such as to make us answerable for *every such word in the day of judgment*; for *by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned*. If in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, how much more *swift* should we be to hear,

than *to speak!* Nay, this is not a mere matter of preference or expediency, but of vital importance to our religious state and character; for James says, *if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* One is ready to say, as the apostles when Jesus stated the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of God, *Who then can be saved?* Difficult as this duty is, however, it is not impracticable. James supposes the case of a Christian who shall have completely attained the mastery over this little indomitable member; for he says, *if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

The present is certainly a talking age; and when we have any thing good and profitable to say, any thing that shall *minister grace to the hearers*, it is right to deliver it freely; but, alas! as there are too many *itching ears*, there are also too many babbling tongues. To *speak the words of truth and soberness* in a diction suitable to the subject, is a heavenly art, a divine gift. But that eagerness to teach, when we should rather learn, is put in so serious a form by the apostle, that it may well stop the crude effusions of such self-constituted *masters in Israel*. Such, he says, *shall receive the greater condemnation.* The responsibility of teaching, in regard to religion, is so great, that those who assume it, uncalled for and unqualified, must look for a *greater condemnation* from *the master of assemblies*, than if they had not assumed so responsible an office. *Judgment will begin at the*

house of God, and with the ministers of the word. Apostles, divinely gifted and inspired, tremble at their high office, and ask, *Who is sufficient for these things?* but others can dash into the ministry with confidence; utter many unwarrantable things with volubility; obtain a hearing from the unthinking crowd, carried away by sound and feeling, as the orator listeth; and fancy themselves inspired to say and do such things, as grieve the hearts of the humble and the wise.

In all religion there is order; and he who presumptuously disturbs this order, commits an offence of great magnitude, for which he will assuredly be called to account at the highest tribunal.

If I cannot, then, bridle my ungovernable tongue, do thou, O Lord, put the bit into my mouth, that thus I may obey, and *my whole body, soul and spirit* be turned whithersoever thou wilt! Pardon, O Lord, the multitude of evil words which thou hast heard from my lips. Blot out this *thick cloud of transgressions for thy name's sake*, and make me, by the indwelling admonitions of thy Holy Spirit, *a perfect man, offending not in word*, and thus *keeping the body in subjection* to a heaven-taught mind.

SUNDAY.

CONDUCT TOWARD THE WORLD.

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.—Col. iv. 5, 6.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience: that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.—1 Pet. iii. 15—18.

HERE are two distinct duties required of Christians, in their intercourse with the world. First, to seize every opportunity which may be improved to the advantage of religion and the spiritual welfare of our unconverted neighbour; and secondly, to be prepared with good reasons for our Christian faith and practice, and render them cheerfully to *every man that asketh for them*.

It is in this way that Christians become *the light of the world*—a common benefit and blessing

—the very *salt of the earth* for its preservation and fertility. Too often, alas! do we suffer opportunities of usefulness to our worldly connexions to pass away unheeded or unimproved. A Christian in a spiritual and zealous state, while sufficiently *diligent in business*, will also be *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*. A word fitly spoken, *how good is it*, and what good may it do! what good has it done! Jesus merely said to the Samaritan woman at the well—*give me to drink*. This led to a conversation, so interesting and important, that Jesus forgot his thirst, and the woman her water-pot; the one giving and the other receiving something infinitely better—*the water of life*. Let us aim more and more at the wise and seasonable introduction of religious topics in our conversation with the world. Let the hand which grasps with iron firmness the great purpose to save men's souls, be covered with velvet-down. As there is nothing really offensive in true religion, it should be introduced decorously. Some have zeal, but not wisdom or courtesy sufficient to carry their point. The manner or the unseasonableness of their effort disgusts, and the end is lost. This duty is of itself a study; but like all other studies, repeated trials according to the directions given, will correct the first mistakes and imperfections; and, seeking the glory of our Lord and Saviour in the endeavour to win souls, we shall soon become wise; for it is a work in which heaven specially delights, and hence, *every man* must, in this way, *say to his neighbour and his brother, know the Lord*.

This duty is *aggressive* on the world ; that which follows puts the Christian on his defence. He must expect, from his peculiarities as a Christian, to have many inquiries addressed to him on the subject by the unconverted. Some from curiosity, some from contempt, as *what will this babler say?*—some from malignity, to *ensnare us in our speech*,—and some from sincerity, desirous to know the truth.

For all these inquiries we must be prepared with an answer, especially for those who come with prejudice or malignity. Each must be answered in a right spirit, not after the manner of the world—but with meekness and fear—with a good conscience under *false accusations of our good conversation in Christ, sanctifying above all, the Lord God in our hearts*. Those who malignantly put to us ensnaring questions, will thus be *ashamed* of themselves for their cruel and unjust suspicions and evil intentions ;—and who can tell but, *the secrets of their hearts being discovered* to themselves, they may be divinely constrained to confess that *God is in us of a truth?*

MONDAY.

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.—John xii. 26.

If ye love me, keep my commandments.—John xiv. 15.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves: for, if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—James i. 22—25.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandment, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.—1 John ii. 4—6.

Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

WHILE our holy religion teaches the most sublime and glorious doctrines, peculiarly its own, respecting the moral condition of man and the way of salvation by the sacrifice of Christ, it is also eminently practical, and lays the most authoritative obligations on all Christians to moral duties. If any one deny this statement, let him read the precepts now before him. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

Alas! the perverseness and wilful ignorance of those *who name the name of Jesus*, and yet deny

the force of moral duty. It will serve them little to say that they have feelings which will prompt them to act in consonance with his will. Man left without a divine rule and authoritative obligation, is sure to err to his destruction. But Christians are not so left to be *a law unto themselves*:—they are *under the law to Christ*. He who rejects this *yoke which is easy*, and this *burden which is light*, shall not find rest for his soul.

Whatever licence, then, others may presume to take, I will adopt the resolution of Joshua, *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord*. When I hear the Lord Jesus saying to his disciples—*if ye love me keep my commandments*; and again, *ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*, I am impelled by every tender and awful motive, to search out of the book of the Lord and read those clear and express indications of his will and pleasure, which the apostle James denominates *the perfect law of liberty*. Admirable description of the Christian code!—Liberty under the salutary restraint of law, and law submitted to by an enlightened, free, and grateful mind:—a double check to licentiousness on the one hand, and to severity and bondage on the other. Who would not wish to be the subject of such a government—to obey such a prince? May his name endure for ever; may his name be continued as long as the sun: may all nations call him blessed. Blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory, amen and amen!

TUESDAY.

CHRISTIAN EQUALITY.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted ; but the rich, in that he is made low : because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth : so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.—James i. 9—11.

THESE precepts are designed to counteract in the minds of Christians, those tendencies which arise out of external circumstances and rank in life. The poor brother in Christ is not, on account of his humble station in society, to sink into depression of mind, discontent, or servility ; nor the rich brother, on account of his possessions, to esteem himself as superior in moral and spiritual worth : much less may he assume any right, by virtue of his wealth, to tyrannize over his *brother of low degree*. For, in truth, they are, as Christians, much more upon equality than is apparent to the eye. *With God there is no respect of persons*. Hence the rich man is not chosen to salvation on account of his wealth or station in society. He is not more justified than his poorer brother ; as that act admits not of degrees. He may not be more sanctified—nay, from the natural influence of

riches and worldly rank, he may be less sanctified. He cannot be more adopted or called, and he may be less prepared to meet the summons, to give an account of his stewardship. As good Manton saith on the place: "Honours and riches do but set us beneath other men, rather than above them; and do rather abate from you, than add any thing to you: and it may be, you have less of the Spirit because you have more of the world. God doth not use to flow in both ways."

We are not to glory over one another. There are reasons enough for all to be humble, tender-hearted, and considerate, one toward another. It is not intended that the poor brother should exalt himself over the rich, in a spirit of defiance and contempt, and rudeness, totally subversive of all order and decency, any more than it is permitted to the rich brother to insult or despise the poor. But as each may find reasons for treating the other with respect on one side, and kindness on the other, in their personal intercourse and demeanour, so, in their own reflections, they may easily perceive that naturally, morally, and spiritually, they are nearly equal; and, when placed side by side at the table of the Lord in heaven, all external and worldly distinctions will have eternally vanished. And, even on earth, how easy were it for him who *lifteth up and casteth down*, to cause the parties to change places; to pour affluence into the lap of the poor Christian, and to make *the rich man fade away in his ways;—the flower fallen and the grace of the fashion of it perished*. In the vicissitudes of life such changes are not rare.

As, then, the present condition of life is so temporary and uncertain, let me, if poor, be exalted in *my affections toward things which are above*; and, if rich, be humbled in my own eyes, on account of my unprofitableness as a *steward of the manifold bounty of God*. Let us be less affected by external accidents and human distinctions, and learn to rejoice in the glorious privileges of the whole redeemed family of God.

W E D N E S D A Y.

SICKNESS.

Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.—James v. 14—16.

THE principal difficulty which attends this much-controverted passage, consists in the clause *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord*. Had that clause not been inserted, the Papists would have had no pretext for their practice of “extreme unction;” which, however, is but ill supported by it; since they anoint only the *dying*, with no in-

tention or expectation of *saving* them ; nor would any have thought it their duty, in modern times, to make use of this unction as a rite commanded by Divine authority to be observed in the visitation of the sick. It would have also relieved the minds of others who, from the insertion, are led to contend that the precept is not binding on us, who possess not the gift of healing the sick. Consequently, in our days, the sick are not to send for the elders of the church to visit them ; or if they do, the elders of the church are not bound to attend to the call.

Let us, then, suppose the clause not to have been inserted. Would not the remaining injunction be considered as permanently binding on all Christians to the end of time ? No minister could object to pray for the recovery of the sick person, and that too *in faith, nothing doubting*, yet with a submissive reference to the sovereign will of God, which must after all, determine the event. As there is no other direction on this important subject in the New Testament, it will be evident that no hasty judgment should be formed respecting its perpetuity.

The difficulty will be diminished by a more accurate translation of the words, which seems to have escaped notice. Read the Greek thus : *Is any one among you ill, let him send for the elders of the congregation ; and, having anointed him with oil, let them have prayed for him in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.*

Confess faults to each other, and pray for each other, that ye may be healed.

In this version the clause is merely *having anointed him with oil*. It is not our custom, indeed, to do this, except at a royal coronation; but in warm climates, oil is used generally as a refreshment to the person when suffering from the scorching rays of the sun; and by the Jews was much used both for ornament and refreshment, as well as for allaying the feverish heat and irritation of the skin under disease.

The clause, therefore, does not appear to be essential to the observance or rejection of the command. In Judea and other warm climates, where nature and custom unite in pointing out the utility of this application to the person of one labouring under the oppression of fever, it might still be observed with the same intent and efficacy as in the days of the apostle James. In colder climes, with different customs, there seems no utility of moment to call for its observance. However, if any should think the clause of permanent obligation, they could not much err by the anointing—supposing they did it simply and without any adjunct of words or superstitious actions, as the Papists do. And as there is no specification of the quantity of oil to be used, or the parts of the body to be touched, the unction might be performed almost imperceptibly to the patient. He, therefore, who would admit the precept to be still binding on the sick and on the elders of the congregation, and cannot in conscience omit any part of the ordinance, is at liberty

to use the unction under these limitations. He does it because it is commanded; and, as no reason is given for it in the scripture, he must give no other reason than that it is, according to his apprehension, a part of the order for the visitation of the sick given by divine authority. This course may excite curiosity, but it will not encourage superstition.

Most, however, in these northern climates, will be ready to dispense with the mere circumstance of the unction, if they can admit the perpetuity of the ordinance. Separating that which was local, temporary, unessential, from that which is spiritual, important, and of permanent utility, we may, for the reasons suggested, and others that could be mentioned, conclude that there is a mutual obligation on members of the congregation, when sick, to *send for the elders* to pray for them, and on the elders to obey the summons. Probably little more was meant by the anointing than a token of Christian kindness and courtesy, such as the pharisee was rebuked for omitting when Jesus was his guest. Probably any similar mark of kindness and good will on the part of the elders toward a sick brother, for to such cases the command seems restricted, in order to sooth pain, and bespeak a favourable regard to the ministerial duties required, may be all that is meant by the clause: and that to mention a known remedy, or to assist in the administration of the medicine prescribed, or to furnish any article of comfort and refreshment to the afflicted brother, may be

equivalent to the kind, cheering, and respectful action of the Orientals—to anoint the head of a friend and brother with oil.

If there be any difficulty in respect of the phrase, *the elders of the congregation*, let us suppose the precept to have arrived at Philippi, and a sick member of the Christian congregation in that city to have acted on the injunction; to whom then would he send? Who are to be understood as elders of that congregation? Surely the term elders must refer to the persons holding office among them: and these we know to have been the *bishops and deacons*, or, translated, *the overseers and assistants*.

As they are to be sent for, not in a private, but an official character, the whole body of the elders must be addressed through the proper medium; but, as there might be many sick, requiring immediate attendance, whether the *whole body* of the elders should attend in every individual case, or whether the spiritual labour should be divided among them according to their own discretion, is not prescribed. That, like many similar duties, must be left to the wisdom, fidelity, and Christian affection of those in office. It would appear, however, that more than one elder should be present to engage in *the prayer of faith*, and to comply with that condition which our Lord attaches to the promise of a gracious answer to such a prayer—*I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father, who is in heaven:*

for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This promise is indeed most ample and resplendent, and is well adapted to the gift and virtue of faith in the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God. It is of permanent efficacy to the end of time, a rich mine, inexhaustible in spiritual good. *The fervent energetic prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God.* Most probably we see so few instances of good arising from the visitation of the sick, because we do not attend to the Divine ordinance concerning it. If the elders be sent for in faith by the sick, and if they go together and offer the prayer of faith, we might expect the fulfilment of the promise: certainly not, if all is done on both sides with coldness and formality.

THURSDAY.

CHRISTIAN FORBEARANCE.

One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.—Rom. xiv. 2–5.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.—Rom. xiv. 10—23.

We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.—Rom. xv. 1, 2, 7.

In the Christian family it will ever be found that

there are some strong and others weak in knowledge and in faith. Each is therefore liable to wrong the other. The strong to *despise* the weak brother, and the weak to *misjudge* the strong. Hence arises the duty of mutual forbearance among the disciples of Christ. Various differences of opinion, and diversity of practice will continually spring up among them: but, whatever be the subject of difference, if not essential to the honour of the gospel, we are here enjoined to exercise a conciliatory and forbearing temper. More is required of the strong than from the weak: they are not to *please themselves* without regard to the feelings, and consciences, and salvation of their weaker brethren. By pertinaciously maintaining opinions and practices contrary to those of the weak in faith and knowledge, when nothing important might be compromised by forbearance, they *walk not charitably*.

On the other hand, the weak have a duty to perform: they ought to put a candid and liberal construction on the principles and conduct of their more enlightened brethren. The weak are liable to censoriousness and bigotry as well as the strong to contemptuousness and intolerance. We are therefore to *receive one another*, with forbearance, *as Christ also received us, unto the glory of God*. *Let every one of us endeavour to please his neighbour in that which is good for edification: and let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

By this kind and magnanimous conduct we shall

in time, harmonize all differences and unite all hearts. .

FRIDAY.

TREATMENT OF THE WORD OF GOD.

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.
—Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

IF so fearful a denunciation as this be recorded against the man who wilfully alters and mutilates the prophecy of the book of Revelation, what less can he expect who shall presume to treat in the same manner any other inspired writing? Yet how many are guilty of such presumption! What responsibility rests on translators, critics, commentators, theologians, moralists, ministers of the word of God! With what humility, diffidence, tenderness, and awe, should they handle his word! What serious concern should they cherish that they may be *workmen which need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*—as the skilful anatomist dissects the human frame, and ex-

hibits every part with scrupulous accuracy, that he may inform and not mislead.

If this duty be obviously laid on the ministers of the word, it as clearly requires every reader and hearer of the word to treat it with the same seriousness, and the same care. The Chinese, it is said, have so great a regard for written characters, that every scrap of writing is treated by them with respect. It seems to them probably, that writing is the symbol of mind, and its best expression; and that, to treat a piece of writing with disrespect, is not only to dishonour the writer, but to show a barbarous indifference to the value of so divine a gift. Were all into whose hands the Holy Scriptures come, to receive them with similar sentiments, surely it would be no more than is due to a book which may be demonstrated to have come from God. We should not then be grieved at such perversions of holy writ, to suit the taste, or theories, or practices of *men of corrupt minds*—nor shocked at the levity with which they can allow themselves to treat the sacred text. But what are *our* feelings in comparison of the offence given by such conduct to the ever blessed and glorious Author of these words? Who shall, after the solemn warning here given, expose himself, by interpolations, to *all the plagues written in the book*; and, by culpable omissions, to the erasure of his name from any participation in the blessings promised to the faithful?

· SATURDAY.

AGAINST CREDULITY.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God ; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God ; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world. 1 John iv. 1—3.

NOTHING can be more opposite to the spirit and injunctions of the gospel than fanaticism, superstition, and credulity. If men denominated Christians have appeared in this disreputable guise, it needs no great measure of sagacity to distinguish between the perversion and abuse, and the genuine character of the gospel. An author is not answerable for the ignorance and prejudice of his readers ; nor is a prophet accountable for the misinterpretation of his predictions.

God requires us to believe his prophets, but he also affords us the proper evidence for judging of their claims ; and he requires that we should use the intellectual faculties which he has bestowed upon us, in order that, on so momentous a subject, we may not be deceived. There is, however, a strange perverseness in man ; he will eagerly em-

brace the false, and scornfully reject the true. *I am come in my Father's name*, says Jesus, *and ye receive me not—if another shall come in his own name him ye will receive.* Unnatural combination of unbelief and credulity!

If, in the apostle John's days, *many false prophets had gone out into the world*, how many more have appeared since! And if, in the halcyon days of miracles, and gifts, and holy inspirations, the spirit of error, fraud, and delusion, reared its monstrous head—*bellua capitum multorum*—what may be expected in this distant age? We need not, in fact, go far, to discern fanaticism and credulity in their most flagrant forms: but our duty is plain. All religious claims and pretensions must be brought to the test of scripture. He who flies to tradition, human authority, and probability, deserts his true guide. How are we *to try the spirits whether they are of God*, but by the tests which he himself supplies? The apostle John gives one suitable for the detection of the false prophets, which infested the church at the close of the first century. *The incarnation of the Son of God*, according to the doctrine promulgated by himself and the other apostles, with the concomitant doctrines of the fall, the atonement, sanctification, and others, became a test of truth. The spirit confessing that fundamental point would be correct in the rest dependent upon it. Truth is decked with a golden chain. We must study divine truths in their connexion with each other. The doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus, as stated by the apostle Paul to be, *God manifest in the*

flesh, if well understood and received, will lead to other important doctrines, and may therefore now serve the purpose of a test, by which all *setters forth of strange doctrines* may be tried. Antichrist, in every concealed or plausible shape, shall start forth in its proper form, touched by the point of Ithuriel's spear.

Amidst the enchantments and delusions by which we are beset, in passing through this world, may *the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth*, and preserve us from *all seducing spirits and doctrines of devils*; and while millions upon millions have been and are still deceived by Antichrists of different name—Mahometan, Popish, or Fanatical—may we press forward, girded with truth, and guided by infallible wisdom.

SUNDAY.

AGAINST IDOLATRY.

My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.—1 Cor. x. 14.
 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.—1 John v. 21.

As the religion of Jesus is designed to become universal, and is, in fact, extending throughout the globe, this precept might well have a place in the Christian code; for, alas! how large a portion of the human race has always groaned under the impure and cruel reign of idolatry!

Most of the first converts to our religion were, before their change, addicted to idol worship. Some apostatized to their former superstitions, and others, in time of persecution, were induced to offer sacrifice to the idol to save their lives. As Christianity advances in the earth, and is encroaching on the territory and possessions of *the strong man that keepeth his goods in peace*, the ancient strife will be renewed ; new converts will be gained from idol worship, and they will be exposed to similar temptations with their elder brethren in Christ. To such Christians the precept is more particularly addressed.

But it points also to those who, professing Christ, go forth to foreign countries, on the business of the world, and who, on that account, have occasion to mingle continually with idolaters. By familiar intercourse and commercial engagements, they may insensibly become indifferent to the turpitude of the crime of idolatry, and may even be induced to sanction, or at least connive at, the obscene and disgusting spectacles of the heathen. Worldly interest, too, may creep in ; and, after a time, may induce Christians, so called, to identify themselves with the system, as in the case of the pilgrim-tax at Juggernaut, and actually to derive a revenue from the infernal practices of idolatry. Such things are *a wound and a dishonour* to the Christian name, while they are in direct hostility to the divine laws.

One inspired apostle says, *Flee from idolatry*—another, *Keep yourselves from idols*. If tempted, make your escape by flight : and, entering the for-

treasure of spiritual truth and holy worship of the divine Majesty, look down from its high battlements on the foe with determined resolution, that by the help of God, he shall never scale those sacred walls.

We have all need, even where the iconoclast has spent all the fervour of his zeal in demolishing the last vestige of idolatry, to take heed to the commandment, lest, while glorying in the observance of the letter, we habitually violate it in the spirit.

MONDAY.

STUDY OF VIRTUE.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.—Philip. iv. 8.

How large a field does the apostle here present to the thoughtful mind! Our previous meditations on these topics have not, perhaps, been commensurate with their just claims. The whole range of moral and religious duty is here proposed for our study, in order that *our righteousness may exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees*, among the Jews, or even the most exalted instances of virtue among the heathen. Christ requires

of his disciples such proficiency in the art of *living soberly, righteously, and piously in the present world*, that he may, at the last day, have numberless trophies of his redeeming grace and love, to exhibit before the congregated nations—Jews and Gentiles; before the barbarous Scythian or the polished Greek; such models of Christian virtue and excellence as shall silence, for ever, all the proud pretensions of human merit and worldly science; and cause the whole universe to acknowledge the immeasurable superiority of Christian principles of virtue in their manifest and undeniable effects: that, as Christians in their duties are not actuated by mercenary and self-righteous motives, like the world, but by *the love of Christ*, so their lives are more abundant in all good works, *cæteris paribus*, than other men. And shall our glorious and divine Lord be disappointed of this triumph? Shall he not in this, as *in all things, have the pre-eminence? Heaven and earth shall fail, but his word shall not fail. He must increase.* He will bring his trophies of Christian virtue and substantial excellence *from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south.* Shall I, by an humble, diligent, devout study of Christian morality, enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand and perform that which is commanded, be one of those *saints in whom Jesus shall be glorified and admired in that day?** Shall I contribute to swell the host *which no man can number, who have followed the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,*

* 2 Thess. i. 10.

through evil report and through good report, solicitous only to be approved of the Lord, in that day? Such felicity can be only a dream to those who bear the name of Jesus, and keep not his commandments. But they cannot be kept, unless known and understood; and they cannot be understood, without devout, and humble, and constant meditation.

Teach me then, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. May I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold! May I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way!

T U E S D A Y.

MORAL PERFECTION.

Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.—
Matt. v. 48.

THIS precept is here placed the last of the preceding series, because it seems to comprehend the whole, and to require particular attention to be directed to every preceding precept; for, what is perfection of the whole Christian character, but perfection in each of its component parts? No Christian precept is recorded as a mere pleonasm, gracefully to fill up an unsightly blank in the moral

system; but each is given as a stone, useful and necessary in its place, in that *building of God*, which he has long been erecting in the world. The more exact and faithful our obedience to the Christian laws, the more symmetry, beauty, and stability will the sacred edifice acquire. It is *in Christ, as the chief corner-stone*, that *all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord*.

It will, however, be objected that the precept seems to require an impossibility; that absolute moral perfection is unattainable in this life, even by the most eminent Christian; that even the apostle Paul renounces the idea of such perfection by saying, *Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect; but forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*.

This is true; but, on examining the apostle's meaning we shall find that it is consistent with the precept of Jesus before us; for, he immediately adds this exhortation: *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded*:—intimating that some *were already perfect*, but in a sense different from that in which he had before used the term. In the former sense he is referring to the completion of his Christian course; in the latter to the advancement of Christian knowledge and experience. In the latter sense, the apostles frequently use the term *perfect* as applied to Christians, when they do not mean absolute moral perfection; as when the apostle

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, that *Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the fitting of the saints for ministerial work, for the edification of the body of Christ; until we all arrive to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we may no longer be infants, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, who is the head—Christ.*

The apostle Peter, addressing new converts, says, *as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby; and again, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* The apostle John, also, distinguishes between children, young men, and fathers, in reference to their several attainments and standing in the Christian life.

A *perfect man*, then, according to the Scripture phrase is one who by diligent and devout regard to the divine will, has attained to a complete knowledge of the doctrines and duties of religion, and is capable of stating and defending the one, while he is living in the constant practice of the other. The term *perfect* is not to be taken absolutely, but relatively. In comparison of his early knowledge, experience, and conduct, the *perfect man in Christ*, is a very superior character. After years of meditation, holy discipline, and virtuous practice, he is scarcely to be recognized as the same person. The portrait of the babe in Christ will

materially differ from that of the same individual as a full grown man.

While, therefore, we are relieved from the apprehension that absolute moral perfection—obedience without any flaw or imperfection whatever, in thought, word, or deed, is required of Christians, as being manifestly incompatible with *the law of sin which is in the members, and which wars against the law of the mind*, so long as we are in the body;—we are at the same time not exonerated from the duty of *going on unto perfection*, and of *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. The commands of Jesus are indeed numerous, extensive, minute, difficult, and contrary to our perverse and unsanctified nature. But they are not on that account impracticable, arbitrary, and unprofitable. They are all reducible to one grand principle,—*Love*. *Let the love of God be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit given to us, and we shall find the yoke of Jesus to be easy and his burden light*. We shall say,

“ Make me to walk in thy commands,
’Tis a delightful road ;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.”

In this Spirit what may not be attained toward that absolute perfection to which every true believer in Jesus is *predestinated to be conformed*—even the *image of the Son of God—in whom was no sin*? From this perfect model of moral excellence in human nature, based on the divine attributes, may mine eye never be withdrawn ; but, *beholding in the mirror of the word the glory of the Lord*,

may I be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

Relative Precepts.

THESE are so denominated because they arise out of the natural and necessary relations of life. They are of such extent and importance, that they require a separate treatise for their proper elucidation; but, as the design of the present manual is merely to afford hints for meditation, and, by a convenient arrangement, to assist the Christian in the study of the laws of Christ, it would be enlarging the work beyond the intended limits, to attempt such an illustration and enforcement of these and the ecclesiastical precepts which follow them, as would be. in any measure suitable to the magnitude of the subjects to which they refer. They are committed, therefore, to the devout and earnest attention of the reader, in the hope that the habit of serious meditation, which may have been, in some degree, established by the daily use of the preceding pages, will induce him to pursue the same course on a more enlarged scale; not only with regard to those duties denominated relative and ecclesiastical, but also, in respect to those which are more personal and experimental. Thus will *the man of God be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works*; and thus will the intent of the heavenly gift of inspired Scripture be accomplished; that holy word of God, *which is*

*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,
for instruction in righteousness.**

WEDNESDAY.

DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church : and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies : he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church : For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself ; and

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

the wife see that she reverence her husband.—
Eph. v. 21—33.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.—Col. iii. 18, 19.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.—1 Pet. iii. 1—7.

THURSDAY.

DUTIES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be

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well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Eph. vi. 1—4.

Children obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.—Col. iii. 20, 21.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.—1 Tim. v. 8.

FRIDAY.

DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven : neither is there respect of persons with him.—Eph. vi. 5—9.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God : and what-

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soever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.—Col. iii. 22—25.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.—Col. iv. 1.

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.—1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.—1 Pet. ii. 18—21.

SATURDAY.

DUTIES OF MAGISTRATES AND SUBJECTS.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the

power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues ; tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.—Rom. xiii. 1—7.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the King, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men : as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.—1 Pet. ii. 13—16.

Honour the king.—1 Pet. ii. 17.

Ecclesiastical Precepts.

SUNDAY.

WORSHIP OF GOD.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.—Matt. iv. 10.

The same precept.—Luke iv. 8.

Make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.
—John ii. 16.

And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.—Acts x. 25, 26.

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations: that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device.—Acts xvii. 22—29.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ: and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that

prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn : but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God : but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman ; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves : is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her : for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.—1 Cor. xi. 3—16.

Desire spiritual gifts ; but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God : for no man understandeth him ; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, edifieth himself : but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied ; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he inter-

pret, that the church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken; for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth; but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks? seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest. For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not

children in understanding ; howbeit in malice be ye children ; but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people ; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad ? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest ; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. How is it, then, brethren ? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course ; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church ; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but they are commanded to be

under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What! came the word of God out from you, or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently, and in order.—1 Cor. xiv. 1—40.

Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Ephes. v. 18.
By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.—Heb. xiii. 15.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Coloss. iii. 15—17.

I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who

will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.—1 Tim. ii. 1—4. 8. 11—15.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.—Heb. x. 23—25.

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Harken my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye

fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.—James ii. 1—12.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.—Rev. xix. 5.

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.—Rev. xix. 10.

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.—Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

MONDAY.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNION.

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.—Rom. xiv. 1.

Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.—Rom. xvi. 16—18.

Be ye not unequally yoked together, with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.—2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.—2 Cor. vii. 1.

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power (I bear record) yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the

fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.—2 Cor. viii. 1—4. 7, 11.

Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.—2 Cor. viii. 24.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss.—2 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephes. iv. 1—6.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of

God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.—Philip. ii. 1—8. 14—16.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.—Philip. iii. 1—3.

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.—1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.—1 Thess. v. 9—11. 25—27.

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.—Heb. xiii. 1—3.

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.—1 John v. 16, 17.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.—Rev. xviii. 4.

TUESDAY.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named

among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good; know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.—1 Cor. v. 1—13.

But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which

was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love toward him.—2 Cor. ii. 5—8.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work; and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.—Gal. vi. 1—5.

Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.—1 Thess. v. 13—15.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not

at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.—2 Thess. iii. 6—15.

Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works ; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse : for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry ; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged ; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.—1 Tim. v. 9—16.

Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.—1 Tim. v. 19—21.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected : for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.—Heb. xii. 14—17.

Of some have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.—Jude 22, 23.

W E D N E S D A Y.

SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges ? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof ? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ? Say I these things as a man ? or saith not the law the same also ? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen ? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes ? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written : that he that ploweth should plow in hope ; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal things ? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather ? Nevertheless, we have not used this power ;

but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.—1 Cor. ix. 7—14.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.—Gal. vi. 6—8.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, The labourer is worthy of his reward.—1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.—3 John 5—8.

THURSDAY.

OBEDIENCE TO CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they

that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.—Heb. xiii. 17.

FRIDAY.

HONOUR DUE TO CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness: and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.—Phil. ii. 29, 30.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.—1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.—Heb. xiii. 7.

SATURDAY.

Ministerial Duty.

OF ELDERS OR BISHOPS.

1.—*To spread the Gospel through the world.*

Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye,

therefore, and teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

II. —*To watch against heresy and schism.*

III.—*To feed the church of God.*

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.—Acts xx. 28—31.

IV.—*To take care of the helpless.*

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx. 32—35.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these

* μαθητευσατε, make disciples of.

hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

v.—*To be of pure morals.*

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach : not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre ; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous.—1 Tim. iii. 1—3.

vi.—*To maintain order in their families.*

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?—1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

vii.—*To be men of some experience.*

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.—1 Tim. iii. 6.

viii.—*To possess the esteem of their neighbours.*

Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without ; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.—1 Tim. iii. 7.

ix.—*To remind the brethren of their danger and duty.*

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane

and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little : but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—1 Tim. iv. 6—8.

X.—*To command and teach.*

These things command and teach.—1 Tim. iv. 11.

XI.—*To exemplify the Christian doctrine.*

Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.—1 Tim. iv. 12.

XII.—*To read, exhort, and teach.*

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.—1 Tim. iv. 13.

XIII.—*To improve gifts.*

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—1 Tim. iv. 14.

XIV.—*To study ministerial duties.*

Meditate on these things : give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all.—1 Tim. iv. 15.

XV.—*Self-inspection.*

Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine : continue in them ; for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.—1 Tim. iv. 16.

XVI.—*To reprove tenderly.*

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father, and

the younger men as brethren ; the elder women as mothers ; the younger as sisters with all purity.—1 Tim. v. 1.

XVII. *To provide for destitute widows.*

Honour widows that are widows indeed : but, if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents ; for that is good and acceptable before God.—1 Tim. v. 4.

These things give in charge that they may be blameless.—1 Tim. v. 7.

XVIII.—*To ordain with caution.*

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins : keep thyself pure.—1 Tim. v. 22.

XIX.—*To separate from corrupt men.*

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness ; from such withdraw thyself.—1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5.

XX.—*To flee from covetousness and follow godliness.*

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that

will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things ; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession ; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Tim. vi. 6—14.

XXI.—*To exhort and warn the rich.*

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life.—1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

XXII.—*To preserve the truth and avoid unprofitable controversy.*

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions* of science falsely so called : which some

* Objections.

professing, have erred concerning the faith.—1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.—Titus iii. 9.

XXIII.—*To cherish courage and constancy.*

Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.—2 Tim. i. 6—8.

XXIV.—*To abide steadfast in the truth.*

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.—2 Tim. i. 13, 14.

XXV.—*To provide a succession of ministers.*

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.—2 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

XXVI.—*To be self-denying.*

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 Tim. ii. 3.

XXVII.—*To make the ministry their chief employ.*

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.—2 Tim. ii. 4—7.

XXVIII.—*To admonish others against mere verbal controversy.*

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.—2 Tim. ii. 14.

XXIX.—*To expound the Scripture with skill.*

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker.—2 Tim. ii. 15—17.

XXX.—*To be holy.*

Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. (See section xxii.)—2 Tim. ii. 22, 23.

XXXI.—*To turn away from formal hypocrites.*

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall

come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ; from such turn away.—2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

XXXII.—*To be attached to the Holy Scriptures.*

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

XXXIII.—*To preach with faithfulness and zeal.*

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.—2 Tim. iv. 1—5.

XXXIV.—*To follow the apostolic rules in church order and institutions.*

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou

shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God ; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre ; (see section v.) but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate ; holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. (See section xxii.) For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision : whose mouths must be stopped : who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.—Titus i. 5—11.

XXXV.—*To inculcate practical religion.*

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine : that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.—Titus ii. 1—6.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again ; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that

bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—Titus ii. 9—14.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. This is a faithful saying; and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.—Titus iii. 1, 2, 8.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.—Titus iii. 14.

XXXVI.—*To exemplify the doctrine of Christ.*

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.—Titus ii. 7, 8.

XXXVII.—*To maintain ministerial authority.*

These things speak, and exhort; and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.—Titus ii. 15.

XXXVIII.—*To warn or reject heretics.*

A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.
—Titus iii. 10, 11.

XXXIX. *To take office from pure motives.*

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.
—1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

XL. *To avoid domination in office.*

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.—1 Pet. v. 3, 4.

XLI. *To conduct controversy with meekness.*

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.—2 Tim. ii. 24—26.

OF DEACONS.

1. *To be of good morals.*

sons be grave, not double-tongued,

not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.—
1 Tim. iii. 8.

II. *To be sincere in their belief of the gospel.*

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.—
1 Tim. iii. 9.

III. *To be experienced men.*

And let these also first be proved; and let them use the
office of a deacon, being found blameless.—1 Tim.
iii. 10.

IV. *Having virtuous wives.*

Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers,
sober, faithful in all things.—1 Tim. iii. 11.

V. *Maintaining domestic order.*

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling
their children and their own houses well. For they
that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase
to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in
the faith which is in Christ Jesus.—1 Tim. iii. 12, 13.

SUNDAY.

ECCLESIASTICAL OBEDIENCE.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.—Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17.

NOT only is every congregation of Christians, but every minister of Christ, and every individual believer included in this solemn injunction. Christ by his Spirit, in the word, speaks to all who are in Christian fellowship, and to all who ought to be so pledged to his cause, but stand aloof. What a volume of ecclesiastical law is contained in the few preceding pages! What devotedness of heart does it require to make them our study; and, in all things relative to the church of Christ, to make them our standard of appeal and our rule of action. One has no right to complain of deficiency in the New Testament on ecclesiastical matters. Much more than that which is here collected is to be found therein, under the form of example and suggestion, which may be lawfully and most beneficially brought into the service of the church.

Here are the canons which must regulate all ecclesiastical affairs. Here is the true spiritual court. Let degrees be taken in this faculty. But

above all, let us study this ecclesiastical law, not with the spirit of the world—not to raise a huge fabric of Pharisaical or Jesuitical or Rabbinical traditions—not to *lade men's shoulders with burdens, which we ourselves will not touch with our fingers*—not *with feigned words to make merchandize of the souls of men, and convert the house of God into a den of thieves*; but *in simplicity, in godly sincerity*, to elicit the great leading principles of ecclesiastical duty; and, where specification is wanting, to apply principles under the guidance of heavenly wisdom, renouncing the guile, the pomp, and the coercion of worldly expediency.

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